

REASON

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EDITORIAL

"Reason" is the organ of the Rationalist Association of India. The object and aims of the Rationalist Association of India may be briefly described as follows :—To combat the superstitious beliefs and practices of the masses in this country and rescue them from the baneful influence of Priest-craft. To encourage people to educate themselves so as to cultivate a scientific habit of mind, or, at any rate, an inquiring habit so that nothing should be accepted which cannot stand the test of reason and common sense. To reject all arbitrary authorities in matters of belief however hoary and venerable they may appear. No well-informed and intelligent person can deny the pernicious influence of priest-craft on the destiny of mankind. Priest-craft has ruined and destroyed empires and kingdoms. People under its sway have been degenerated and have fallen below the culture of a progressive civilization. One has only to read history carefully to realize this. It has retarded the progress of civilization wherever it has existed and done much to create misunderstanding among nations. If Christianity, for instance, had still its sweet will as it unfortunately had for centuries, Europe would still be in a state of barbarism. That Continent owes its civilization to the bold and fearless thinkers and investigators who braved the penalties imposed by religion on any

one who dared to contradict the teachings of the Church. It was dangerous for any one to pry into the secrets of Nature and the penalty was Death. Despite the mighty power of the Church to discourage thinking and investigation, Europe progressed towards civilization in proportion as the influence of religion decreased in those countries that were fortunate enough to possess intelligent men who were so brave as to defy the anathemas of the Church. On the other hand, those countries which were too deeply sunk in the erroneous teachings of the Church produced bigots and fanatics who eventually ruined them—*e. g.* Spain and Portugal. Russia owes a good deal of its present political tribulations to the ignorance of its people caused by an ignorant and corrupted clergy. We have another remarkable instance of an enlightened and cultured people who sank into ignorance, superstition and fanaticism in the case of the Arabs as soon as they took their religion too seriously. In their case, an erroneous idea that religion must over-shadow all other activities turned their minds into chimerical channels with the result that to-day Arabia is described as the "Land of darkness and ignorance." Persia is no better and one can cite other such countries where an ignorant and fanatical priesthood has succeeded in completely deteriorating the intellectual progress of their inhabitants. In the case of the Arabs, or Saracens, as they were known in Europe, one has only to recall that in the early days of Islamism before they were obsessed by an erroneous idea that worldly culture was unnecessary and sinful, they were the pioneers of civilization and scientific culture. In fact, they saved Europe from the awful darkness in which it had sunk thanks to the bigoted and fanatical priest-hood which reigned supreme over a besotted continent. Here, in India, the position is even more remarkable. This country rightly boasts of a very ancient civilization. Any unbiassed observer is, however, bound to admit that that civilization became arrested long, long ago. It is not difficult to trace the hand of priest-craft in this retrograde movement. It has made India the

home of superstition and mysticism : it has encouraged an irrational conservatism which is harmful in every respect. It has encouraged ignorance, intolerance, fatalism, communalism, and the grossest superstitions. It has made the people live in an unreal world—a world of sprites and spooks and ugly phantoms. Even to-day the real cause of disharmony, suspicion and mistrust among the people is to be found in differences of religions and beliefs.

It is the conviction of the Rationalist Association of India that no real progress is possible in this country, no permanent understanding and good will among the people of different creeds and castes can be arrived at, no solid *rapprochement* in a political as well as social sense is possible, until the people are sufficiently enlightened on religious questions to treat these matters in a rational manner. We appeal to all well wishers of India to help and encourage the Rationalist Association of India. It has a difficult but noble task to perform.

SUPERSTITION

In the childhood of the human race every rare or inexplicable event, whether in the heavens or on the earth, was regarded as "supernatural." For example, eclipses, comets, meteorites and other unusual meteorological phenomena were a supernatural portent, or were referred to as the direct interposition of the Deity. But the progress of modern knowledge has shown that these and all other phenomena—however "mysterious" and at present inexplicable they appear to be, (at least some of them)—are part of the order of nature. They are quite natural and not "super-natural." Even a couple of centuries ago many of the marvels of modern scientific discovery would have been classed as supernatural.

To know, for example, what was happening less than half an hour ago, 7,000 miles away, or to listen to the voice of, and interchange conversations with, friends in far distance lands—the commonplaces of the telegraph and telephone to-day—not to mention the transmission of wireless messages across vast distances of land and ocean, and the instantaneous photographic record and reproduction of rapidly moving objects, not to mention the, at present, undeveloped marvel of Television—all these would have a few years ago been thought even by western minds, impossible or "Miraculous."

The average religious mind, the world over, is ever apt to forget what Butler pointed out in the first chapter of his "*Analogy*", "that our notion of what is natural grows with our greater knowledge.

Even theologians, from Augustine onwards, have said that "miracles do not happen in *contradiction* to Nature, they are not supernatural events but only *transcend what* is at *present* known to us of nature." For obviously it is not possible to determine the boundary between the perfectly natural and what is called the "Super-natural" until the *whole of nature* is open to our knowledge. And if at any point scientific investigation finds a limit what is beyond is only a *part of nature yet unknown or unexplored*. So that whenever we come across what appears to be "Marvellous" and inexplicable phenomena in nature, we can always feel assured that, sooner or later they will all receive their explanations and be embraced within some part of the wide domain of science. We can indeed proceed further and

say that, these considerations cannot be restricted to the visible universe. The vast procession of phenomena that constitute the inconceivably stupendous order of nature do not by any means come to an abrupt conclusion when they can no longer be apprehended by our present organs of sense. We know that science already takes cognizance of the imperceptible, imponderable, and infinitely rare luminiferous Ether, an unseen *form of matter* wholly different from anything known to our senses, the very existence of which, indeed, is only known inferentially. As an eminent scientific writer has said, "In earlier times the suggestion of such a medium in space, would probably have been looked upon as strong evidence of insanity."

What, precisely then, is meant by the term "Superstition"? Etymologically it means the standing over an occurrence in awe or amazement: shutting out the light of inquiry and reason. Where this light enters, a mystery is no longer enshrouded by helplessly and hopelessly standing over it, but we begin to understand it. Superstition is, therefore, the antithesis of understanding, and of that faith in the intelligibility of nature which forms the very foundation of science and the hope of all intellectual progress. In a lecture on Science and Superstition, delivered by Kingsley at the Royal Institution in London in 1866 superstition was defined as "Fear of the unknown." But fear is not always the basis of superstition, though it is a frequent accompaniment of it. For instance, the ancient Greek—"who believed that every tree or stream or glen had its nymph, whose kindly offices men might secure by paying them certain honours,"—was a *superstitious man, though he did not in this case exhibit "fear of the unknown."*

We may note that some trivial occurrence may once have been followed by disaster, and forthwith it becomes an omen! Thus, it comes to pass that a mere chance coincidence is to the superstitious a *law of nature*. And it is worth noting that, not only amid the culture of ancient Greece and Rome, but right down the ages, to the present time, we find this perfectly irrational habit of mind. Nor, curiously enough, is it confined to the credulous and the ignorant. Voltaire we read, "always went home out of humour when he heard a raven croak on his left, but not when on his right." Many gallant officers have faced unmoved all the horrors of the battlefield but dread to sit down thirteen to dinner, just as the peasant dreads to hear the screech owl. Omens and portents are still as rife throughout India and Europe today as

in Ancient Rome. We note also how Great Warriors in History, such as Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Julius Caesar and others, were found guilty of superstitious fear at certain moments of their lives, and armies of brave men have been known to be thrown into a state of panic by a trivial incident, as when Caesar fell on his face on landing for the first time in Africa.

I cannot recall one well-authenticated incident in Napoleon's career which convicts him of downright superstition. We read of his curious habit of making "the sign of the cross" on receipt of good news, probably a relic of the days of his childhood or the instructions of his mother. But Chaptal gives in his "Souvenirs" a curiously amusing incident concerning the great man. It refers to the summons issued by Napoleon for the meeting of the Jews in a Sanhedrim at Paris. While Napoleon, Chaptal and others were at dinner, the Emperor's uncle, Cardinal Fescl, entered in consternation and in reply to Napoleon's inquiries, made answer: "Do you want the end of the world to come?" "Why?" retorted the Emperor. "Do you know that the Bible foretells the end of the world when the Jews are recognized as constituting a nation?" Chaptal, and the guests laughed, but the Emperor became serious and went out with Fescl to an ante-room where he remained conversing for an hour. Next day the Sanhedrim was dissolved.

Now, assuming the story to be true, it does not necessarily imply that Napoleon believed the "end of the world" to depend on the assembly of the Jews in a Sanhedrim, or any such absurdity. It simply means this: that he, as being responsible for public opinion and public credit, foresaw very clearly grave inconvenience to his Government if the Royalist *founders* of the Boulevard St. Germain, or the "Bears" on the Bourse spread the rumour that the "end of all things" was at hand. For clearly, for one thing, it would stop the payment of taxes, and might cause a headlong fall in stocks. Fescl's idiotic story caused Napoleon very little concern about "the end of the world", but very much concern, indeed, about a general repudiation of debt.

To sum up then, superstition may be accurately defined, I think, as—a belief, not in accordance with facts, where no connection exists between the cause ascribed, and the effect imagined, and issues in gross superstitious practices when such a belief is regarded as affording help or injury.

FUTURE OF RATIONALISM IN INDIA

At the moment of writing revolution has broken out in Spain, the most Catholic country of Europe. The monarch has fled and many a Jesuit and nun had to leave the country. Every revolution has been the outcome of years of oppression. During the last century, people have risen first against the State, but it has not been long before they turned their attention to orthodox and organised religion as well. We have seen this in Russia; we are seeing now in Spain; we are hearing shouts of 'down with the Papacy' even in Italy, and one does not know what may happen after the downfall of Mussolini. Religion has always supported those in power and has been a great help to all political tyrants. Therefore, it is but natural that people should realise that they cannot destroy one and save the other. The great war opened the eyes of many a man and woman to the hollow claims of religion, and the soldier and his family thought less of their gods and priests than before. In this country, we have had neither a war nor a revolution; but last year we have witnessed something that was very near to both of them. Will the fight for political emancipation then develop itself into a wider battle for Liberty and rid this country of superstition and orthodox religion? I feel that, like in the West, orthodoxy and organised religion will be both seriously undermined and no more wield that great influence that they now exercise over the masses of this country, though the progress may not be as rapid as in the West because of various reasons that are peculiar to India.

Centuries of religion have driven into our very bones the principle of respect for our elders. Though this principle is essential for the smooth working of society, yet it has its limitations and it is just these that are not realised here. Many families still live on the old joint-family system where the old man is the head and is respected and has got to be consulted and obeyed in every little thing even in his dotage. His word is law and everyone is anxious to please him, and if that cannot be done nobody is desirous of displeasing him. This is a great handicap to the younger people who, because of their wider education, cannot stomach all the conservative beliefs that the old man accepts. They are afraid of hurting his feelings and, instead of openly declaring for emancipation, hide or suppress their agnosticism and fall in line with others in the house. To very many is attached the second chain

of a wife. Marriage in India are mostly arranged by the parents and performed when the boys and girls are still young. The wife is, more often than not, less educated than the husband. Women have always been the pillars of religion and they are in no way less so in India. With her ignorance of everything beyond what she has been taught in early childhood, she cannot contemplate with anything less than horror the idea of anyone not following the teachings of her ministers whom she fully believes are the embodiment of all truth and wisdom. Hence, she will throw all her weight against the scepticism of her husband. She will speak of the disgrace his irreligion has brought upon the good name of the family, of the feelings of their parents who are now ashamed to show their faces in public, of the taunts of her friends who make it a point to ask her about her husband on every occasion, and never feel tired of expressing their surprise and holy indignation and horror at his agnosticism. She now feels that her life is only a misery and all that is left for her is to pray to bear her cross in fortitude. The parish priest and the pious old maids are profuse in their sympathies, and never let a meeting pass by without sadly reminding her of her special case and cheering her up with the promise of their prayers for his conversion. The aged parents will implore with tears in their eyes not to fill their last days with sorrow, but to wait till they die, after which he can do just what he likes. Friends will be mightily concerned and speak in whispers about his new way of thinking and will wait for an opportunity to caution him against the path he is now treading. Others, who are filled with more of heavenly spirit, will call him a fool and wish that he might be attacked with a severe attack of smallpox or some such foul disease which will surely make him think of God. Wherever he goes he feels a strangeness in the attitude of his old friends. Obedience to the parents, affection for his wife, consideration for the feelings of his friends and relations often leave him no other alternative but to follow the faith of his fathers. As he gets older, other interests claim his attention and the enthusiasm of his younger days is smothered and he is now lukewarm in his religion though still a member of the fold. Children then arrive and a break from the wife and children is still harder. Later, his daughters become of marriagable age and now, of all times, he has to show that he is one of the community in every way. Many a young man anxious to support the modern tendency for reform has been seeking to marry a girl of his status from another caste, but most of them have failed, and they have had to dilute

their enthusiasm for the sake of respectability. It will therefore be much more difficult for the daughter of an unorthodox man to get a husband. In India, we have not yet advanced to that stage when both the parents and the daughter can survey with calm the prospect of a life without marriage as our women have not yet attained economic independence and sexual freedom. So as years roll on, this doubting Thomas of the younger days becomes a fossil himself. The tragedy is complete when an educated man, a man of a social position who, earlier in life had not had the requisite courage to stick to his convictions, passively or seemingly actively, permits his name to be utilised to prop up an institution which, in his heart of hearts, he knows is BUNK. These men and women, who are educated, and yet for fear of what the public may say, are afraid to come out in the open and declare their views are the greatest barriers to the progress of any new ideas. The crowd looks up to these leaders for direction and yet, how precious little of this do they ever get from these men on the top? It is a common experience of many of us to meet people who have anything but the orthodox views on the religion they publicly profess; yet they keep their doubts to themselves: though they do not let orthodoxy prevent them making the most of this life. This fear of social boycott is a handicap that is met with in all countries, but in India it acts with greater vigour because of the limited circles we move in.

The bad effects of social boycott can be mitigated to some extent if the person who is mentally rich is also economically independent. Then he can live without the company of his former friends for some time and it will not be long before he can find new friends to suit him. He can shift his field of labours to another province or country and enter the society of the chosen few who think and feel like him. In India economic independence is denied to most of us. I know of many a young man full of new ideas and burning with enthusiasm and yet starving. They cannot adapt themselves to their surroundings. One often meets with disappointed men who were like this in their younger days, but later on had no other alternative but to take up a small appointment somewhere and bury their genius and freedom of thought. These are the torchbearers of new thought and the slayers of orthodoxy, but in our country creative genius is not appreciated and has no value. Among those that are wealthy in our country most are so from birth, and along with their life they inherit methods of spending their riches either in lavish waste or in endowments of temples, mosques, churches etc. The

wealth of the land is always at the service of religious propaganda which is always carefully clothed in so many garments like hospitals, orphanages which make the appeal more humanitarian and more seductive. Only when industrialism makes its headway in this country will creative genius find its value because then it will be necessary for the magnate to keep in the front line with new ideas. We are not yet very near this era. This poverty of the middle classes throws many other difficulties in the way of the diffusion of fresh thought. Travelling in India is not done to the extent that is desirable. We have not yet developed the habit of having an annual holiday when we can travel and see and meet others who think differently from us. This limits the chances of changing our angle of vision. This same poverty prevents many from buying new books every month and keeping themselves in touch with the latest thought. Our lending libraries are not many in the big cities and are certainly insufficient in the mofussil.

Rationalistic propaganda is greatly handicapped by the illiteracy of the masses. To believe in a religion knowledge and literacy are not essential; on the other hand, faith thrives best on an ignorant soil and missionaries reap their golden harvests among the less advanced sections of the human race, where they go to spread the 'light'. With rationalism it is different. In the memorandum of the Rationalist Press Association of London, Rationalism is defined "as the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions of authority". This necessitates a critical faculty and a fair amount of knowledge and the ability and the facilities to gain further knowledge. In India the percentage of people who can read and write is very low, and even in this low figure quite a number know only the vernaculars. In the whole of the Bombay Presidency there are about ten thousand students in all the arts colleges. Further degrees are sought after more for their money-getting value than for anything else, and once a person is well settled either in a profession or a business he soon forgets everything else. Because of the smaller reading public and, a yet smaller buying public, the area over which propaganda can be spread is very limited and the efficacy of this propaganda is minimised by the number of vernaculars. We are still wanting one uniform language for this country and its value when it comes will be immense. Further, the

number of men who devote their time to writing on the religions of India and exposing their conflicts with scientific thought and social advance is very very small: probably such as did start on that career died of starvation. Therefore, propagandist literature is scarce on the whole. As in other parts of the world, it is difficult to get space in the daily papers for anything that is not in agreement with the views of the majority of their readers, and since the majority here is one that still sticks to orthodoxy, expressions of rationalistic thought can be rarely accomodated. Missionaries take the fullest advantage of the student population. In many cities the best colleges and schools are in the hands of the missionaries and in the other schools and colleges most of the teachers are of the believing type. Recently, one of the members of the Senate of the Bombay University wanted, but failed, to introduce theistic teaching in the colleges under its control, though the majority voted for a committee of inquiry. This, therefore, limits the possibilities of propaganda among the students. So we see that not only are these difficulties are great and propaganda is insufficient and in its infancy but what is more, it seems impossible even to touch the fringe of those millions that live their lives under the blight of ignorance and superstition.

Religion has entrenched itself in the hearts of men by its offer of solace and hope and by the beauty of the ritual that has been woven into it by its priesthood. A person who does not believe in a supernatural being soon realises that his position in this world depends greatly on himself and less on others and is able to sketch the range of his possibilities as both the above factors can be estimated to a considerable degree of exactitude. With the majority of us this range does not vary much from the station of life we are born in; but this has to be faced as inequality is a permanent feature of this universe. The tendency of modern civilisation is to approximate and beat down these differences. Often this prospect is disappointing and the more so to the poor man. He feels the world up against him, but is not willing to accept his lot with resignation and wants to live in the hope that it will be better at a future date. He then conveniently gets round his position by creating a god who one day may smile upon him and place him amidst the highest of the land. If all his efforts fail then it is easier to console himself with the opiate saying that "inscrutable are the ways of god" and hoping for a greater reward in heaven. He creates a god who will give him what this

earth and this society denies him in this life and for that reason this god must be above nature. It is plain as daylight that this is living through life under a mild anaesthesia. To the poor Indian who has no recreation and to whom life offers nothing but toil and labour under the most harrowing conditions—and there are so many of them—this belief in a god and the life—after is something to hold to and make his lot more bearable. Only when he is more educated and his economic condition improved so as to place other ways and means of recreation and compensation within his range will he agree to come out of this anaesthesia and muster enough courage to face the disappointments of life along with the rest in this universe and to accept as an unavoidable item the fact that by the very accident of being inhabitants of this earth all of us are bound to have not all, but only a few of the things that we desire. Education and the economic improvement that will follow as a result of the spread of socialism will ultimately conquer and eat into the domain of the Lord.

The growth of rationalism has been due to the growth of scientific and accurate knowledge. This came into conflict with old ideas and explanations that were vouchsafed by divinely founded religions. As the latter maintained that because of their divine origin their explanations of the phenomena we see around us were, are and will always remain to be the correct one and expected science to adjust itself to their teachings for such as those that could not accept these dogmatic pronouncements there was no other alternative but to secede from a rigid, dogmatic and orthodox church. That is why perhaps rationalism has made such progress in the West. With Hinduism it is different. Educated Hindoos say that their religion is very accommodating, having even a school of atheists in the midst of the six schools. They like its philosophies and consider it as an attempt at an explanation of many of the riddles of the universe. Since infallibility is not tacked on to the interpretations of the scriptures a greater latitude in thought and action is permitted. Hence he feels that after denuding it of all Brahmanical interpolations and other grafts of superstition, and these are many and widespread, he has something which does not violently clash with the findings of modern science. He seldom prays and, except for an occasional ceremony in the house connected with birth, marriage or death, religion does not enter intimately into his everyday life. The fear of punishment if he does not observe the ten commandments is not before

him as there are no ten commandments to be obeyed, and certainly no classification of mistakes into moral and venial since the former to be punished *with everlasting torments of hell and the other with the temporary purificatory fires of purgatory*. The theory of reincarnation explains to him his present lot and its shortcomings, the belief in destiny takes the edge off his responsibilities, and since the next life is only a stage in the process of evolution towards the creator it does not so seriously worry him. This latitude that is permitted in the Hinduism and the complacency of its entire conception is bound to delay the progress of rationalism, and the replacement of Hindoo philosophy by an ethical code of life and a scientific explanation of nature's manifestations. Of all the communities the Hindoos ought and be first to throw off orthodox and organised religion because they are so closed to rationalism, but it is just this proximity and the lightness with which the Hindoos wear the garment of their religion that may not impel them to cast it off. On a different footing stand the Muslim and the Roman Catholic.—both are fanatic and dogmatic. The reaction against Christianity is seen in Europe today, and it will be seen in India as well at not so distant a date. The Muslims in India still ask for favoured treatment as they consider themselves to be not as well educated as their Hindoo brethren. When mass education spreads amongst them then those that are more highly educated and have imbibed a wider culture will not hesitate to wish goodbye to the faith of their ancestors. We see such examples in Turkey and in Egypt, not to say that they are not existing in Bombay as well. So long as the various religions maintain that they have always propounded eternal truth, and that what was considered satisfactory centuries back ought to be considered as satisfactory centuries ahead, the prospects for rationalism are bright. Only when religious teaching is brought in line with modern knowledge, will this exodus from church, mosque and temple cease;—the gates of hell may not prevail only if heaven is converted into an annexe of hell.

There is another factor that is for the moment not advantageous for our purpose. Today the big fight in India is for political power and this is fought on a religious platform. Unfortunately the country has been thinking in term of religious sections. I, for one, cannot understand why the civic rights and political privileges of a Muslim or a Christian must be different from that of a Hindoo. For our separatist tendencies we have to a great

extent to thank our religious teachers who, in our infancy, impress on our minds that everyone else who does not follow the same religion as ourselves is normally bound for hell, and since the most important mission, if not the only one, we have on this earth is to save our souls, we are encouraged to consider this non-believer as someone with whom the less you have to do the better. Many of us attend denominational school and there the difference stands out much more prominently. This seed of alien feeling has been seduously fostered and nourished by others for their own purposes. So today we see the craze for conversions, not so much for the sake of souls as for gaining more political voters. Hindus are anxious to convert the Muslim and Christians, the Muslims are desirous of converting the Hindoos, and the Christian missioneries are in no mood to slacken their efforts in converting the 'heathen'. The Muslim and orthodox Hindoos are preparing to share the untouchables between them. And the latter, instead of being unlightened in the right way and pensioning the gods and their priests who have originated and perpetuated their present condition, are staging battles royal for temple entry and are postponing their day of freedom,—and this, too, for political purposes as their leaders are asking for reserved seats. Today it will be impossible for a person to enter a legislative body if he stands on a rationalistic ticket: perhaps his name will not be seen on the voters list for these names are classified according to religions and yet there is no subsection for nonbelievers. Since there are still a few politicians who are asking for communal electorates, we may not get that encouragement from the political leaders which we would expect to get otherwise.

Illiteracy, poverty, political dependence and antiquated customs, individually and collectively, support and perpetuate religious beliefs and customs that cannot stand the rest of reason. The future of Rationalism is intimately bound up with the economic condition of this country and is bound to improve with its advance. Once the wealth of the country and of the individuals is increased, illiteracy will not take much time to disappear. With the desire for knowledge generated by a wider education and with an increase in the purchasing power of men and women the prospects of effective propaganda are much brighter. It is true that the improved conditions will also place the same services at the disposal of the champions of orthodoxy, but Rationalism has better material to offer and must win in the long run.

Signs of the awakening of the people can be seen everywhere. Most of the youths, who took part in the last political struggle actively or passively, are rationalists and are convinced that the powers of superstition and ignorance must be destroyed. Labour is being organised by workers some of whom are socialists in their ideology and that again means that the twilight of the gods and their mercenaries is at hand. Even among those that still continue to remain within the fold of various orthodox religions, signs of restiveness are not wanting. We hear of leagues for social equality, self-respecting leagues no-caste associations, civil marriage societies, and of various rationalist activities in different part of India. All these stand for the same ultimate object to fight against anything that is dogmatic. Nearer home, a section is growing in strength among the Parsees who are asking for different methods of disposal of their dead and a modernisation of their religious practices. Some of the younger Bohras have revolted against the commands of their high-priest, some of the Khojahs have already seceded from the Aga Khan, and a very large number of Hindoo young men are agnostics. It is true that considering the vastness of this country these few sparks seem negligible. But they give an indication of the way the wind is blowing. The task ahead of the Rationalist Association is big and the path to the goal is long and arduous. We want unstained support from all men and women who think rationally. An intensive and sustained propaganda is necessary for which both money and men have to be found. The cities will have to be tackled first, and in the cities the younger people before anybody else. The younger the recruits the lower the mortality rate and the higher the birth rate. The youth with their enthusiasm are better propagandists than older people whose bodies may not let them do half as much as they would like to do. We want more of literature, and for that purpose man should be well paid for any literature that they may prepare for publication. This literature should reach the homes of all those that read and write so that they will soon realise the absurdity of many of the traditions they have been keeping up and help us in sweeping out of this country as much of superstition and orthodoxy as possible.

REASON OR FAITH?

In 1917, Father Goodier, now Arch-Bishop Goodier, delivered a lecture before a group of Christian students at the Grant Medical College, Bombay.

The burden of his discourse was:—"That Faith was superior to Reason." He illustrated his lecture by the familiar arguments of Christian theologians derived mostly from the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, namely, that there were two sources of knowledge :—"The mysteries of Christian faith and the truths of human reason". St. Thomas Aquinas, in effect, more than 600 years ago, taught that the latter must be subordinated to the former. According to this view reason alone cannot guide us to discover truth. Father Goodier, in the familiar style of Catholic preachers, sought to prove the truth of this view. He instanced the case of Imagination, Emotion, Spiritual Intuition, the Logic of the Heart, etc. as other instruments of human enlightenment.

The world has moved since the days of St. Thomas Aquinas, and knowledge has progressed since the days when the authorities of the Fathers were undisputed. One need hardly state here that this view of human understanding is replete with fallacies. I take this instance of Father Goodier's tirade against Reason as a typical example of the attitude of Christian religious teachers in general in exalting Faith above Reason.

What, then, is Faith that it must occupy the premier place in human understanding? The Christian priest or clergyman when he talks in this manner is, of course, concerned with his own particular faith. He will not for a moment admit that other faiths have any claim to this exalted position. It is, therefore, necessary to see what the faith of the Christian is. Incidentally this will also serve to clear the point on the faith of other religions, especially Islamism.

What Is Faith?

According to the Christian theologian faith is a gift from God, a special grace that he vouchsafes only to some and withholds from others. The great danger of the believer is to lose that "precious" faith and to become

unworthy of that Grace. How does the believer come by his faith? He is taught by his religious teacher what to believe, and he is warned that to disbelieve or doubt whatever he is taught is a great sin which will make him lose the grace of God and the faith which is essential for the salvation of his soul. Before a person can have faith it is necessary then to teach him certain things pertaining to the creed the priest desires him to belong to. In other words, before the priest can implant that faith in the mind of the disciple he must, to a great extent, appeal to his reason. The teachers of other religions use the same process and claim the same privilege. It is clear, then, that faith in a particular religion or sect generally is a question of accident; the mere fact of belonging to a particular country or community. A person born in Scotland will generally be found to belong to the Presbyterian sect; in Ireland, Spain or Italy he will be a Catholic, in Egypt or Turkey a Mahomedan, and so on. All the talk about divine grace and faith being a divine gift, is nothing but pure moonshine. It is therefore absurd to maintain that Faith is above Reason. The greatest effort of the priest is always to prevent his people losing their faith in the particular religion they belong to. He always insists that he alone can solve the difficulties of doubters; that it is dangerous to trust to one's own judgment, and to other teachers; the faithful are warned that it is dangerous to be too inquisitive in matters of faith; that religion is a mystery which only the priests understand; that teachers who differ from the priest are false prophets; and above all never listen to the other side of the question. Blind belief is the most acceptable attitude towards God and blessed are the poor in spirit. In this manner, the priest fences round the credulous believer and gives him absolutely no chance to learn his religion critically. It is needless to say that the priest uses the most subtle arguments to justify his attitude. He generally contends that the unaided mind cannot understand the mysteries of religion: but the aid must be given by him only; that in matters of faith the people are like little children who must be taught by their elders; that those who contradict the priests, or are opposed to a particular religion, are prejudiced persons whose object is wicked and perverse: that they are out to destroy the faith of innocent believers and cheat them of their religion, and thereby imperil their eternal salvation and turn them from the true path and so forth. "Beware of false prophets" is the parrot cry of all religious teachers.

It is often retorted that Rationalists also have faith in many things though they perversely refuse to have faith in religion, or listen patiently to religious teachers. It is true that one cannot specialize and become an authority in every branch of knowledge. One must depend on recognised authorities on many things. But this is a different kind of faith altogether from that of blind religious faith. One, for instance, may not be a geologist and yet he believes in the assertions of geologists. The reason is that the science of geology is open to any one who wishes to study it; that one is not bound to accept everything he is told by a geologist under the pains of divine punishment; that a theory advanced by competent authorities may be accepted until it is contradicted and proved to be wrong by other competent authorities, and that there is no opprobrium in changing one's mind on scientific questions. But it is not the same thing with religious beliefs. A person who honestly changes his views on cherished religious beliefs is generally branded as an impious, nay a wicked person, a moral guilt is attached to his mental disposition, and his ways are represented to be abhorrent in the eyes of God.

Other Sources of Human Knowledge

Emotion. Priests make much of this feeling of the human mind. They appeal adroitly to this peculiar agitation of the mind which generally obscures the rational faculties of people. Emotion and Sentiment play a great part in the senseless and irrational beliefs of mankind. The rock of ages, the faith of our fathers, the sublimity of our religion, the example of the martyrs, the sufferings of the Founder of the religion, the earnestness and tribulations of the apostles and other disciples, the mysteries of the creed, the consolation it affords, and the special blessings of God on those who stick to it: all these arguments are pressed in with zeal and people are hypnotized, so to speak, in a supernatural and unreal atmosphere which constitutes the religious attitude of the pious. The passion of Jesus and the awful sufferings he undertook for the sake of mankind; his great love for mankind and his triumph over Satan and death are perennial subjects with preachers. The preachers of other religions use the same method to sustain the faith of their followers. Every year during the Mohorrum, the Shiah, an important sect of Islam, undergo a regular debauch of devotion in honour of Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet, who was slain at Kerballa. The emotion of the faithful is raised to such a pitch during the recital of the sufferings of Hussein

that fearfull scenes are witnessed. People beat their breast with frenzy ; lash themselves and even cut themselves with swords until they faint and fall to the ground—sometimes, some even die in this fearful exhibition of religious frenzy. The women of Syria used to mourn and lament in much the same manner over the death of Attis or Adonis, and the priests of Egypt appealed most successfully to their people, when every year, they related the cruel death of Osiris caused by the wickedness of Sett.

But even when the priest is not engaged in all these tales of barbarity and bloodshed, the very manner he conducts what he calls divine service lulls the worshippers into a state of mental inertia and loosens the gate of emotion and sentimentalism. The distinctive dress of the officiating clergy, the peculiar intonation, the polarized phraseology used in the service, the luscious hymns and anthems, the shadow-haunted piles with their vistas of fluted columns, the delicate traceries, the rich colourings of stained glass, the statues and pictures, the burning of incense, candles, and the tolling of bells all this induces a mental condition in which emotion has full play and relegates reason to a much lower plane.

Little need be added to show how unreliable are the other so-called sources of human knowledge, such as Spiritual Intuition, the Logic of the Heart, Imagination, and so forth.

Reason Our Only Guide

Our reason, then, is the only sure guide we have in arriving at sound knowledge and true conclusions. "The instrument of truth is not, never has been, and never will be in the last resort, anything else than Reason—that is, the human mind interrogating every kind of experience and arriving at true conclusions by processes of valid inference. Of course, we know that our Reason is not infalliable, nor is it the only "faculty" we have. But it is the only instrument we have which is provided with the necessary adjustments for the effective prosecution of the search for truth. For, although we make for it no claim to inerrancy, we know that it has extraordinary powers of self-correction which are shared by no other faculty of which we are possessed. As to its alleged and actual aberrations there are two things to be said."

"In the first place the errors that creep into our reasoning can be quite clearly traced, for the most part, not to reason itself, but to bias, prejudice

and emotional indiscipline—three of reason's most formidable enemies. Such errors are to be avoided and combated not by reasoning less or less vigorously, but by reasoning more strictly and more extensively, and by reducing to a maximum the personal equation with its egoistic promptings."

"Secondly, reason has extraordinary powers, peculiar to itself and capable of indefinite extension of controlling, criticising and correcting its own operations. It can be made to respond in a manner truly marvellous to a well considered course of discipline and training, such as those who wish to make capital out of its fallability are extremely anxious that it should not have."

From the little that has been said it will be seen how fallacious and erroneous are the teachings of religious teachers that Faith is above Reason, whereas it is the natural law that in all human affairs, in all efforts where thinking must be done Reason must be supreme as it is the only Beacon to guide us in the true path.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

Knowledge.

OPEN the doors of Knowledge wide ;
Brush the dust of Ignorance aside.
Let Truth shine bright on all mankind
And release the shackles of the mind.

Trample tradition underfoot,
Tear out Theology by the root ;
Plant sane, clean thinking in its stead—
No more on Christian tales be fed.

Listen not to the petty Preacher
Nor the vapid Bible Teacher,
But rather turn to the Scientist
And noble Anthropologist.

In your Philosophy be sane,
And do not overcome Life's pain
By seeking solace from the Priest—
Be bold and free—An Atheist.

"ALMA KAYE."

WHO CREATED GOD?

A Psychological Need of Man Till the Growth of Scientific Knowledge.

Most people say that God made men but nobody says who made God. History books universally used fifty years ago in Europe and America, and many still in use today, started with the assumption that our planet Earth, the visible heavenly bodies and all forms of organic life upon the Earth were created by a special act of God between Monday, October 23rd and Friday October 28th, 4004 B.C. This was the universal Christian belief as an uncontestable fact in those days which has since been disproved by physical scientists. But even so, it is still the common belief regarding the creation of the universe by God on the part of millions of ignorant Jews, Christians and Moslems.

Moses, the common prophet of Jews, Christians and Moslems, was the creator of this God whom, he asserted to be the creator of the universe, and Christ and Mahommed accepted the same fundamental doctrine. The metaphysicians of the Zoroastrian, Hindu and Budhistic schools asserted that this universe is infinite in space and time and everchanging without beginning or end, and that it could therefore not have been created at any definite period of time or, at any rate, man knows nothing about its creation, beginning or end. However they also created a God or Gods with the attributes of Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence but called him self-created and unknowable by man unless he attains saintliness. Both these schools created their Gods to reward and punish man so that he may fear Him and therefore develop a socially good behaviour and character or that man's mental need to suit his megalomaniac greed for God's immortality, perfection and power be satisfied and his miseries on the earth be considered by him to be necessary evils which must be endured to attain his illusory perfection.

Between these two theories (1) of the creation of the universe by an all-powerful God and (2) of its eternal and infinite existence without any act of creation, the physical scientists accept the latter theory from what they have been able to know from the latest discoveries of Astronomy, Geology,

Biology as well as Anthropology. It is therefore very essential for the masses to know the simple plain facts as discovered by the scientists and which can easily be understood by any ignorant man, so that the myth and superstition of the creation of the universe by God can be removed from the mind of man. Certainly it will cost him some further exertion to form a thoughtful habit to realise that God or Gods are metaphysical theories created by the human mind to enable him to adjust his life with his environmental universe and thereby shape his conduct and relations with the outside world accordingly.

We see the Sun by day and the visible heavenly bodies on a clear night. But if we use the help of powerful telescopes we see a larger and larger number of such heavenly bodies according to the capacity of the telescope used. Some of these heavenly bodies are stars larger and hotter than the Sun, but appear to us such small stars, as they are many times more distant from us than our sun which is calculated to be 93,000,000 miles away from the earth. The sun and stars are in the condition of hot and bright gases containing the same chemical elements.

Our planet Earth was first separated at an indeterminate period of time as a gaseous mass from the parent Sun or whirled about under the influence of centripetal and centrifugal forces as fragments in the great planetesimal disc. The other planets like Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn etc. are such fragments also and have their moons, one or more, as our earth has its moon revolving round it once in each lunar month.

Geologists roughly estimate that the Earth must have taken about 800,000,000 years for the gas to form the solid crust on its outer surface. Great cliffs of rock which required hundreds of million years to effect their genesis are in many places now exposed to the gaze of man. If we assume that the Earth might have separated from the Sun 12,000,000,000 years ago and divide these years on an ordinary clock of 12 hours, the geological time of 800,000,000 years would be equal only to $4 \left(\frac{8 \times 60}{120} \right)$ minutes.

Geologists and biologists estimate that out of these 800,000,000 years, the azoic period, i. e., the period prior to the origin of living structures, must have been about 470,000,000 years while the origin of living structures could

have taken place about 330,000,000 years ago forming the archeozoic and post-archeozoic periods.

Out of this latter figure the age of invertebrates, fishes and amphibians must have taken about 225,000,000 years before reptiles, birds and mammals could have appeared on the earth. After the appearance of mammals 25,000,000 years ago man must have appeared about 1,200,000 years ago. Elementary truths of biology can explain to an average man in the street how man is the highest form of evolution of matter in motion on the earth and how he is further evolving more in the brain and internal organs than in the external organs of his body under new environments.

The historic period of man's existence on the earth as conventionally talked of from the beginning of the Egyptian civilization is estimated at about 10,000 years only from today, while according to the teachings of Moses, Christ and Mahommed ancient history begins with the advent of Adam on Friday morning October 28th 4,004 B. C. But from what has been stated above one can see that scientific history covers a much vaster period of time. Ancient history of man begins with the Eolithic age, whose nebulous origins go back to more than four hundred thousand years ago, and ends with the beginning of the Neolithic or New Stone Age, some fifteen thousand years ago. Medieval history may logically be said to comprise the period from the beginning of the Neolithic to the dawn of the Age of Metals and the beginning of human written records 4,000 B. C. Modern history might be said to extend from about 4,000 B. C. to the coming of the Industrial Revolution, following the middle of the eighteenth century of the Christian Era. The period since the Industrial Revolution, so different in its characteristics from anything which has gone before in the history of human society and culture, might well be called the contemporary period.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the scientists cannot accept the theory of creation taught by Moses, but do accept the eternity and ever-changing character of universe, without beginning or end, by a process of inductive reasoning which had also been propounded by the earlier metaphysicians on *a-priori* or deductive reasoning of abstract dialectic in ideas. It will thus be realised that prophets and metaphysicians creat their own

God or Gods instead of any God having created man or for the matter of that this, our infinite universe.

To the scientists all life is the moving condition of matter which has its energy always with itself either in the kinetic (active) or potential (inactive) form, though any part may undergo continuous transformations under the influence or impetus of the forces of any other part of this universe. They do not need a God to keep men socially good through fear of punishment or hope of reward from Him, but they regulate their social behaviour and character towards similar socially good or better moral action as rendering greatest service to self and society so that greater and greater happiness and comfort could be made available for everybody. The individual egotism, selfishness, greed and lust of megalomaniac man are displaced by a useful, amiable, co-operative citizenship without an excessive greed for pelf, power and prestige or competitive jealousy and mutual wasteful destruction or friction.

The belief in the metaphysical concept of God, the immortality of the Soul, and reward and punishment after death in another world or another life improves man's social character to a certain extent, but helps to keep him conservative, opposed to radical reforms in society and maladaptable to the changing conditions of social life on the earth under the new economic forces of a highly powerful mechanical age making it possible for man to control tremendous mechanical and chemical forces to the betterment of human happiness, if not misused for individual or group greed for power and possessions. These beliefs act therefore as opiates for the miserable masses invented for capitalist religiosity to make them less militant and more submissive to their earthly miseries as necessary evils inflicted by the Great Invention of an All-merciful and All-wise God inscrutable in His ways and means.

MANEKLAL H. VAKIL.

THE PHARISEES AMONG PARSIS

There is considerable justification for the popular belief that the Parsis are the leading community in India regarded from diverse points of view. Closely viewed, however, it is doubtful whether the lauds that are bestowed by the Parsis upon themselves, chiefly at their communal feasts such as they celebrate in the current De month, are commensurate with the progress which is truly due to them.

In matters religious, the average Parsi is as orthodox, in the degraded term of the word, as almost an average non-Parsi Indian. Whatever progress is made is accomplished not with the willing concurrence, but in the teeth of the opposition of the orthodox. It is the utter helplessness of the latter which permits social advance. It is not their good-will, it is their impotence which makes forward movement at all possible.

Chief Causes of Parsi Back-Wardness

The two curses which have kept back the Parsi community are moral cowardice of its leaders and the time-serving, temporizing, methods of the major section of the Parsi Gujarati press. To take the former first. From time to time, reformers arise, from time to time they deliver lectures, write in the newspapers against the age old harmful social and domestic usages. But let a couple of opposing letters appear in the Parsi press and the would-be reformers are frightened into silence! If the opponents, mostly anonymous, are influential, which is to say wealthy, the silence is permanent. It is difficult to illustrate one's meaning without concrete examples, much as one would like to avoid personalities. What is, for instance, more degrading, more intolerable, more exasperating than the funeral ceremonies of the Parsis? The hour and a half or so during which the *Geh sarna* is performed are a mortal toll on the patience of the most patient among the mourners. But the men attend the funeral; pass through the ordeal; the dead body is carried and consigned to the Towers; there is some grumbling; a letter or two in the newspapers, and everything subsides into the same humiliating apathy till social duty urges one to submit to a fresh trial.

Scholars Lack Moral Fibre

Are scholars of the Parsi religion unaware of the utter stupidity of the ceremonial, the recital of inconsequent paragraphs wrenched from bizarre texts? They are not. It is not so very long since Sir Jivanji Mody summoned sufficient courage and started what looked like a sustained crusade against this funeral ceremony which has not even the dubious merit of antiquity. But there was some opposition in the Press and the gentleman, afraid of unpopularity, collapsed into soul-comforting dumbness. There is a number of such old customs related to birth, marriage and divorce, death and posthumous spirituous jugglery awaiting abrogation. They have no relation to modern society. They are a survival from the days of unthinkable barbarism. They are gradually being dropped, but, as I said, not because the reformers have the spirit to combat them as Ahrimanic which they are, but because the orthodox now feel that their ill-will cannot prevail. Let our young men, our shoals of Ph. D.'s., come forward and expose the practices with the courage and its consequence, noble poverty. There is for them the shining example of Dastur Dr. Dhalla of Karachi. There are numerous social customs among the Parsis which they once had the temerity to load on to the tolerant shoulders of Hinduism. Let the scholars cease to shy at truth. Let them boldly state that these usages are not inconsistent with those which, to this day, obtain in Persia, and that it is moral turpitude to attribute to others (Hindus or Moslems) what our ancestors have bequeathed to us.

The Venial Parsi Press.

Another canker which effectively hinders progress is the Parsi Press conducted in Gujarati. Its activities are the very apotheosis of Pharisaism. Who has not heard of the notorious typical Christian preacher and missionary to the Africans? He gloried in the personal conviction that he could always preach temperance to the Heathens with the greatest effect after a couple of pegs of the best Scottish brew. This may be a legend; but it is a fact that the Parsis have tolerated, encouraged and enriched men who, with foot-long cheroots in their mouths, have indicted devastating denunciations of the un-Zoroastrian vice of smoking, threatening the libertine Parsi habitues with perdition as depicted in the charming vision of holy

Arda Viraf, at once the hero of the faith and brother and husband of seven sisters.

In Bombay, the centre of Parsism, the public platform is now rarely used for social reform. The Anglo-Indian press is either indifferent or naturally fights shy of displeasing the plutocrats who hold the keys to the Heaven here below. And the intrepid and truthful publicist finds no admittance to the popular Parsi papers. He is ostracised. The sorest need of the reformers is a free and liberal public organ. Such an one must be independent of advertisement. The Editor must be above the whinings and pleadings of old men with susceptibilities ready to be wounded on the one hand, and above being intimidated by the purse-proud and unscrupulous lawyers who impose heretical beliefs, on the innocent mass and craftily threaten legal action when opposed. Our young men who have courted jails for their political convictions ought to be ready to defy trumpery suits for defamation. After all, he is hardly worth his salt who has not tasted of the inequities of our laws. The world of progress can do very well without perpetual wobblers, fair weather sailors and experts at placating both hare and hounds. How far these Pharisees have misled the Parsis can be seen from their sermons against the use of flesh and wine in the community. Neither is commendable in itself. But to abstain from flesh foods and intoxicants from hygienic and dietical grounds is one thing; to impose vegetarianism on the half-backed, emotional youth and semi-hysterical women as a doctrine of Zoroastrian faith is quite another. It is the prerogative of exalted dissemblers ever afraid to speak the Truth; ever ready to pamper the vices of the rich by unmanly acquiescence. It is not vague and occasional trouncing of the noisome strategems of these limbs of law prostituting their talents to the detriment of the community that will be really helpful. A sustained campaign is essential.

Tartufes Must Be Unmasked

Unless concrete instances are cited as they occur, their nefarious activities cannot be checkmated. To give one out of the many examples, one of the unmasked "respectable" scoundrels in the community who shuts himself up for three hours every morning in communion with "god" or in pious meditation, believes so little in common truthfulness as to write to friends of

his, the lie which he knows to be a lie, that his opponents are in the pay of the British Government and the C. I. D. and are earning their living as *agent provocateurs*! Scores of examples can be adduced at any time to demonstrate that outward piety and true morality rarely go hand in hand. The greater the externals of Godliness the less respect for ordinary integrity and common code of honor. The poor orthodox, the real honest fanatic believers would be amazed when the personalities of these miscreants are revealed. These are the men by whom the community is guided in matters religious by a conspiracy of utterly selfish press and astute dissemblers pretending to be leaders.

I hope that *Reason* will soon prevail in the Parsi community. I trust it will supply *the* real need of the community as a medium of the dissemination of Truth against the mendacities cloaked as "religion."

Parsi Votaries of Probity and their Non-Parsi Coadjutors

The Parsi community has not lacked votaries of Truth. The late K. R. Kama, Dastur, Dr. Dhalla, Dr. Jehangir Tavattia and several others attempted to preach it to the many: Consider the number of magazines started in this behalf which have perished. For it is not by mere homiles on virtue that progress will be accomplished. Fearless exposure of vice masquerading as piety is the breath of the existence of an organ professing to serve 'Reason.'

If the conduct of 'REASON' remain in capable and sincere hands, its future is unquestionably assured. And no more sincere worker in the cause of Rationalism is to be met with than Dr. D'Avoine. I knew that despite the infuriated struggle against the untouchables even in South India, where in the name of God's religion barbarities after the Devil's own heart are perpetrated day and night, upon a third of humanity inhabiting this Sub-Continent, there was a surging under-current of revolt against the crores of luxurious unmoral deities who were unable to withstand the onslaught of the virile Musulmans and, in the words of the late Lala Lajpat Rai, whose prayers untied to those of the Musalmans were powerless to stem the onrush of the Christian British. But I had little conception of the

extent and the depth of the revolt against superstition, the subdued and outwardly little manifested disgust against priest Craft, till in my tentative attempts in throwing outfeelers I found that thousands of young men today, Musulmans among them, are willing to throw off the yoke of the parasitic and vicious priest, the nominal Vice-regent of God and puissant deputy of Satan on earth, provided they have honest and brave leaders. There are rationalistic societies in South India which do not appear to flourish only because of the want of means of propagation. Punjab is more fortunate and I hope in a subsequent issue to refer to the welcome labourers of the *People* and Professor Brij Narain, M. A. whose erudite "*New View of Life*" has unfortunately not penetrated into the commerce ridden chambers of the moneygrabbers of Bombay. It should reach those Parsis who commit with a light heart what they believe to be sins in the divine hope of burning them clean once or twice a year along with heaps of sandal wood in the sanctum of Udwada, where whiteturbaned priestly lads pester the pilgrims with requests for orders to say prayers for their health and prosperity in consideration of a couple of nickels and deprecate by special supplications in dead language the wrath of an angry Diety. These recognised touts of a divinity greedy of fragrant wood and existing on incense are the future spiritual ministers of the enlightened clan of Bombay Parsis !

Greater Impartiality in Criticism

Finally, I hope we shall soon see an end to an unfortunate infirmity that the endeavour of the Rationalists has so far been directed mostly against Christianity and Hinduism alone. The Christians are perhaps sanguinely complacent because of the consciousness of their material strength, though incidentally I am loath to deny the great benefits that they have conferred upon India by their educational and curative institutions alone. Some of our Rationalist critics are siezed with trepidation all over as soon as it is suggested to them that untouchability, for instance, deserves to be castigated as practised by the Parsi Mobeds quite as severely as in the case of Brahmans. And as for Islam, while their leaders, chiefly of the Ahmadi sect, repudiate, for instance, the madness which attacks the Mullahs when Hindu musical processions pass by mosques, the Rationalist critics think discretion to be the better part of valour and never touch upon the one hundred and one abuses which retard the march of men glorying in beliefs which are each an

excreescence on original Islam. Here our confreres in the Muslim community may be looked up to support our attacks on the organised sanctimonious with much greater energy than they have practically displayed.

G. K. NARIMAN.

Our valued contributor, G. K. N. writes with a good deal of bitterness and righteous indignation against the apathy, indifference and cant to be seen in the Parsi community in matters religious and social. Though these short comings are felt by many, few have the courage to denounce them publicly. To a great extent the same may be said against other communities here. Take the case of the well educated Indian Christians. Many of them dare not openly declare their non-belief in the Christian dogmas and ceremonies, etc., however convinced they may be of the pernicious effects of such beliefs. The social pressure on them is so tremendous and the consciousness that Christianity has raised their social status, whether it is a true religion or not, make most of them hesitate to declare themselves openly. Willy, nilly they must continue to actively support a creed in which they have no real belief. As regards the Mahomedans, let it be frankly admitted that their educational standard is still too low to allow them to know better.

(Ed.) REASON.

INDIA, THE LAND OF RELIGION

We pride ourselves on being a conglomerate of peoples the most religious in the world. The consciousness of this supposedly great virtue is *naturally strongest amongst the educated and the most representative Indians*. It is these men who are guiding our destinies, who are doing most of the thinking that is translated into action by the nation. I have not in mind the small body of men who have made the study of religion their life's job, but rather those who, by virtue of their intellectual attainments, are able to go deeper into the subject than the layman and yet are incapable of mastering the subject sufficiently to develop originality of thought in relation to it. It is true that it is the savants who have been responsible for providing the fallow soil in which the "Spiritual-India" Myth has grown and flourished. But those that have sown the tares have been our leaders, political and social. Support from an Idol of the People like Mahatma Gandhi or the revered C. R. Das, either directly or indirectly, would do more to broadcast this myth than a fully organised propagandist body of savants.

Before we can discuss the effects of this state of affairs upon our national life, it is necessary to examine a little closer whether the statement that India is par excellence a land of Spirituality, Morality, and Religion can stand the racket of criticism.

Firstly, it is quite clear that for this statement to be of any, but academic, value it must refer to present day India. Such facts as that India was the cradle of civilization and the source of all religions can be of little help to her today.

Let us taste a while the Elixir of Eulogy :—

"India of the ages—India of the sages— of snow-white antiquity rivalling that of her own Himalayas—sacred Mother of the Vedas and Upanishads, on whose breast the Spiritual waters of the Sankhya—the Yoga, commingling with the noblest and the best teachings of Buddha and Sankara, have produced an Ethico-Psychic system of rational philosophy at once altruistic all-embracing and transcendental

which, revealing the riddle of the Universe, leads the initiate and the seeker to the Key of the mystery of life and death—Her we adore.” (Mr. S. C. Mookerjee quoted by K. S. Ramaswamy Sastri in “Hindu Culture”).

Let us cogitate a little on this Ethico-Psychic system of philosophy which is rational and yet altruistic, which is rational and yet all-embracing and transcendental. However, to be just, “transcendental” might have been used here in the sense of supereminent and not meant to delineate the *a priori* nature of this wonder philosophy.

To this day, the snow-white antiquity mentioned above persists in the realm of thought in India, and that is because of the terrible abuse of the word rational. It is only during the last few hundred years that the word “rational” has begun to garb itself in the regalia of a King. Understood in its modern scientific sense, it is proving itself the most potent word of all. To use it in order to quote at par the value of the dialectics of Indian Philosophical Method and the method of the New Philosophy of the West is gross Casuistry. In India, to clear the air of this pernicious idea that the higher forms of Indian religion and philosophy have always been rational and have nothing to fear from rational criticism is the primary duty of every publicist. It is this idea that stultifies us intellectually, completely suppressing all curiosity and criticism in a domain in which these qualities constitute the very life blood of existence. It is of the greatest importance that all the principal Indian Philosophies and Religions should pass through the fire of rational criticism, like their European Counterparts have done during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, before they can be resurrected as living forces in India.

It is only when Religion and Philosophy in India make peace with or compromise with the rational activities of the mind that we shall become a thinking and creative nation and cease to be the reactionary and imitative drudges that we are. A nation that has a vast religious and philosophical literature accumulated in a hundred purposeful or fortuitous ways over a period of centuries and that insists on swallowing the whole indigestible mass as The Ultimate Truth, can hardly be expected to make a mark under modern conditions. Even supposing that we do not wish to make a mark in this

world of Maya, "which is no better than a dream," it is obviously our duty to help the rest of mankind by teaching them to use this Key that we have to the "mystery of life and death". Could we, in the present chaotic state of our depositories of philosophical and religious treasures, undertake a Saviour's Mission? Can we expect to proselytise with fundamental propositions that cheat common sense at every turn and attempt to split hairs with Science? Can we debate with nations on propositions the roots of which, for all we know, may have been frozen metaphors, or divinely sanctioned fantasias, or Commentators' marginal notes, incorporated into the text by mistake? Have we that passion for precise veracity without which personal life is but a drift, and intellectual life on a national scale becomes impossible? Until we develop a belief in the value of objective truth we shall remain just so much flotsam on the ocean of Life. We have given a long enough trial to all the intellectual short cuts imaginable;—revelation, intuition, common all-too-commonsense, axiomatic metaphysical dialectics, and the whole variety of philosopher's eggs, fried, scrambled, poached and bad! It is time we put our faith in Old Mother Earth out of whom "comes the thing birth, the thing unguessed, unwon."

REHEM.

Christian Mission a Menace to India.

One hears a lot about the wonderful good Christian Missions do, but no one ever troubles to find out if this good overbalances the evil that is done by them.

I maintain that Christianizing the "Heathen" tends to denationalization, and in the schools of India, the spirit of Christianity is a dividing spirit.

Through this teaching the Indian Christian becomes alienated from his people. What amounts to a new caste—as if India isn't sufficiently plagued with them already—is created, and, it is said that the zeal of these students for Christianity in later life becomes, in fact, a zeal for caste and caste privileges often even leading to an attempt to conceal their Indian nationality by the adoption of European names.

Is the sole aim of the subscribers to these Missions the conversion of non-Christians to Christianity? If yes, is it some particular kind of Christianity, or will any sort do as long as it carries the Christian label? Is the number of converts proportionate to the energy expended, and are the conversions, when made, stable? Or is the object also to educate, uplift, and humanize? If yes, how does it apply to peoples already in a high state of civilization?

Different Voices

I do not suppose there can be any doubt that the early missionaries had any other object in mind except carrying the cross to the "heathen" and salvation to the "eternally damned"! And although most missions are still organised outwardly for the purpose of saving the heathen from the terrors of eternal torment, in actual practice their work covers a greater field.

In 1808, a dear old Archdeacon, R. E. Moule, in a paper contributed to the Pan Anglican Congress emphatically declared that mission work consisted in "the call to repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; in this alone and in none other is there salvation."

Missions are not undertaken by one sect alone, but there are the R. C., United Free Church of Scotland, Irish Presbyterians, Wesleyan Methodists,

Baptists, Moravians, Lutherans, the Salvation Army, the Seventh-day Adventists, the American and Zenana Missions, and many other lesser-known sects. The funny part of all this is that each sect tries to drown the other's cry that "This is the only way to Heaven, the only path to salvation." So naturally all is not harmony even among the redeemers of the heathen themselves.

Mr. William Baucke in his book "*Where the White Man Treads*" gives an extract from his discussion with a Maori friend of his who says:—"every missionary spoke at first softly, then louder and louder, until the air trembled with the strident and bitter revilings—one creed shouting this, another besmirching and bellowing that! So what could we do? If we forsook the faith of our fathers, which creed should we select and adopt? For they all spoke Truths, yet condemned the "Truth" of the other! And the end was that we sat on our heels and doubted the preaching of either!" Not only do sectarian differences lead to confusion of mind among the low-class uneducated potential converts, but they must also lead to much unedifying competition and antagonism among the mission workers themselves.

Motives and Methods.

To the Catholic, there is not only "one road to heaven", but there are as many roads to hell as there are Protestant and non-Christian sects; so how can there be any co-operation and harmony?

I wonder if a Negro preacher would be allowed to preach to an American or English or South African "white" congregation from a "posh" Abbey in spite of all this talk of Christs message of love and goodwill to all men?

Now we should consider the motives and methods of these conversions, as only very few cranks get converted, with-out something to gain for themselves. We have first, Self-Interest, then Fear, as two of the strongest motives for conversion. We must not neglect also the effect of vigorous distribution of Bibles, etc., Statistics show that since the foundation of the Bible Societies as far back as 1804 and only up to 1922, no fewer than 504,000,000 copies of the Bible have been circulated! What use the illiterate make of these is amusing. "Bibles are bartered for

cows, horses, re-sold at a profit," writes H. B. Bower, and in China, Mr. E. Teichman in his "*Travels in N. W. China*" P. 151, writes "that the books are disposed of so cheaply that they are sometimes bought for the paper they contain, and used in the manufacture of the soles of Chinese shoes!"

And yet another greater field for the propagation of the Christian faith is the Orphan Asylums. These missions collect orphans and unwanted children and bring them up as Christians. One German Catholic Bishop of Lahore, twenty years ago, exclaimed—"How marvellous are the Lord's ways!" "One might almost say that the Divine intention has been to make the parents disappear (die) in order that their children might be led to the mission and there find Christian salvation!" S. Halder's '*A Mid-Victorian Hindu*', P. 156.

Atmosphere for Conversion.

It is not my intention to decry the valuable service these Missions render during famines and epidemics, but it might here be mentioned that it was soon found out that evangelistic teaching alone would not go very far in attracting supporters to Christianity, and sometimes more material was needed for people to even listen to the Missionary—so education, medical care, industrial instruction and social service have been called in aid, and are wisely used, to provide the atmosphere to conversion. "These are the material hand-maids of the Immaterial".

Now let us examine a few opinions on the effect Christianity has on these converts. In a questionnaire prepared by the Rationalist Press Association, G. D. from Lahore writes: "The converts are proud, arrogant and haughty. They think themselves above non-Christians".

"P" from Allahabad writes—"Among these converts, who, prior to their conversion, had to observe the caste rules and were not allowed to drink, conversion had often led to the liquor habit. The same may be said of other evils".

"A" from Travancore writes. "In regards to sobriety, the Christianized native is worse than the rest of his country-men".

"G" from Tanjore writes—"The convert becomes unsettled and unstable."

It is no news to those who have come in contact with these converts that they are apt to acquire a false sense of superiority, become less truthful and more thievish than their less fortunate brethern who have not the solace of a "confession" to purge them of their sins !

I have attempted to show in this short article that what little good these Missionaries may do, the evil they do is far greater, and this evil is not only harmful to the individual, but is more harmful to the country, and as such should not be supported by patriotic Indians. Personally, I would welcome legislation against such conversions.

D. R. D. WADIA.

The Meaning of God.

"A word synonymous with priests or rather the factotum of theologians, the principal agent of the clergy, the business man, the purveyor, the commissary of the saved army. The word of God is the word of the priests ; the glory of God is the pride of the priests ; the will of God is the will of the priests. To offend God is to offend the priests ; to believe in God is to believe all the priest tells us. When God is said to be wroth, it means that the priests are out of temper. Divine laws really mean laws made by priests. The House of God means the house where the priests carry on their profession."

VOLTAIRE.

AT THE SECRETARIES' TABLE.

To all our members and well-wishers, greetings. With the publication of the first issue of "REASON" we have started on our work in earnest. Our object is to combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to create a tolerant and scientific mentality among the people of this country. Such as have an idea of the thousands of beliefs and customs that are prevalent in this country, and of the gross ignorance of the masses will appreciate the enormity of the task before us. But this enormity does not frighten us; on the contrary it will stimulate us in our efforts. We feel that this movement has been long overdue. There have been a few attempts at various times in different parts of the country to start such associations, but they do not seem to have flourished.

* * * *

This Association is only a year old. There was a great deal of enthusiasm at the start. Unfortunately we could not follow up the enthusiasm as other events in the country attracted the attention of all. The future growth of the Association depends upon the encouragement it receives from the well-wishers of rationalistic thought of which there are hundreds in the land. The best encouragement is a large membership. We do know that the social conventions cramp all initiative, but we fail to see any reason for any of the doubters to be just ordinary members and receive the quarterly and other publications. To such others as are bolder and wish to work actively in the interests of this cause, we appeal to enlist as many members as possible. We will be very happy to send forms of application to all those who desire to become members.

* * * *

There has been a little difficulty as regards subscriptions, some having wished that they should be lower. It was the intention of the founders to supply literature to the value of the subscription. This literature was to include the quarterly and any other publications that may be issued by the

Association. It is also the intention of the present executive committee. Various suggestions for the reduction of fees have been informally discussed but no other proposal has been found to be better. It is true we have not yet published anything, but we hope to do so in the near future. Here we may add that the Association will be very happy to consider any work that exposes the drawbacks of religion and will be useful as propaganda for the furtherance of the objects of our cause and publish them after arranging terms with the authors. We hope that our appeal will not go in vain, but will stimulate many learned people to write.

* * * *

The Association has started a library which is located at the office of the secretaries. It is intended to keep it open only twice a week for the issue of books. It is the desire of the executive committee to fill this library with books that will be useful for members of the Association. As the funds at our disposal are not large, we would be very thankful for any contributions, be it in the shape of books or money. Once a week tea will be served at the library to members and their friends and we hope that many will take advantage of this.

* * * *

We have had suggestions from enthusiastic members to make the quarterly a monthly, and one of them was willing to help us to a great extent. But the executive committee feels that it will be better to proceed slowly. If these same members and their friends make this quarterly a success by enrolling members and getting good contributors, we see no reason why we should not have a monthly with its many advantages at a very early date.

We would also appeal to such of our members as are in business to help us by securing advertisements that are in keeping with the tone of the journal. Such of our members as have influence on library committees must try and introduce this journal in the various libraries, and such as can afford to subscribe for more than a copy might do so and inform us of the address of the school or library where they would like their spare copy to be directed.

CONSTITUTION OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA.

1. NAME. This Association shall be called the RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA.

2. OBJECTS. To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a Scientific and Tolerant Mentality among the masses of this country.

3. MEMBERS. Any person above the age of eighteen may become a member of the Association by applying on the prescribed form, subscribing to the objects of the Association and paying an annual subscription of Rupees Five. The committee may refuse to admit any person without disclosing the reason to the applicant.

Such as are desirous may become Life Members by paying a single subscription of Rupees One Hundred.

Students of not less than eighteen years of age may be admitted as "Student Members" by paying annas four per annum, applying on the prescribed form and subscribing to the objects of the Association.

All applications for memberships must be accompanied by remittances which will be returned if a person is not admitted. All subscriptions are renewable in January every year.

Such men and women who have distinguished themselves in Science, Literature, Philosophy and Art may be admitted as Honorary Members by the committee.

A member may resign from the Association by giving notice in writing to the Secretary.

4. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. The Executive Committee of the Association shall consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, two Joint Secretaries, one Treasurer and ten other members, eight of whom shall be elected from the Ordinary and the Life members and two from the Student Members. The Committee shall be elected at the annual general meeting.

FORM OF APPLICATION.

Sir,

I (Full name and address in block letters)

having read the constitution of the Rationalist Association of India accept its objects and agree to abide by its rules. I am over eighteen years of age. Will you kindly enrol me as a Life/Ordinary/Student Member of the Association. I am sending herewith my first annual subscription/subscription of a Life Member and my donation.

Signature.

It shall meet at least once a month to conduct the business of the Association. At these meetings six persons shall form a quorum. Any person who absents himself from four consecutive meetings of the committee will be considered to have vacated office and the committee shall then proceed to fill up the vacancy by co-option.

This committee shall be responsible for all the activities of the Association and shall take such steps as it deems necessary to further the objects of the Association.

5. FUNDS. The funds of the Association which shall comprise of subscriptions, donations and bequests shall be deposited in a bank and shall be operated upon by a person or persons as the committee may decide.

In case, this Association is wound up, the funds shall be distributed in charity, religious institutions being excepted.

6. GENERAL MEETINGS. The annual general meetings of the members shall be held once a year before the end of March when a report with an audited statement of accounts shall be placed before the members for consideration and adoption. The Executive committee shall be elected at this meeting.

Other general meetings may be held at the discretion of the committee or if there be a requisition from not less than fifty members of the Association.

At all general meetings fifteen members shall form a quorum except in the case of meetings that have been adjourned for want of a quorum.

Members whose subscriptions are in arrears for more than six months will not be eligible to vote at any of these meetings.

Clear fifteen days notice of all these meetings shall be given in writing to all the members of the Association.

7. No change in the constitution shall be made except at a general meeting of all the members specially called for the purpose and by a two-thirds majority of the ordinary and life members present at the meeting.

To,

The Secretary,

RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA,

Empire Automobiles Building,

Opposite Charni Rd. Station,

Queen's Road, BOMBAY 4.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor 'Reason' c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. Articles are accepted for publication only on condition that they are not sent to any other journal. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

EDITORIAL

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF RATIONALISM ?

A lively controversy was recently conducted in the Literary Guide of London on the question of the future outlook of Rationalism in England. It showed that Rationalists in that country are not in general agreement on the question. The Rationalist Press Association of London, being the recognized body which directs the activities

of Rationalism, was looked upon as being able to give an answer to the question. Many of its members believed that it should give the lead in the matter, and should have a clean cut policy in the sphere of its activities. Some thought that the Association should now cease to expose the absurdities of the Bible and should now settle down to a constructive programme which should mainly consist of education on pure rationalistic principles and the cultivation of a Scientific Humanism. Others thought that the time is not yet ripe to give up Bible-smashing and attacks on the supernaturalism of organised religions, especially Christianity. The "Guide" left the question in the hands of the Right Honourable J. M. Robertson, the veteran and eminent writer on Rationalism, for him to sum up the discussion. He did it in a masterly manner and we are sure many in this country will agree with him. Mr. Robertson rightly thinks that the Rationalist Press Association has still a large scope to cover in Bible exposure and idol-smashing; at the same time nothing should prevent it from beginning a constructive programme of an educative kind such as suggested by some members of the R. P. A. As a matter of fact, this is precisely what the Association has been attempting to do all along by its dissemination of the cheap reprints and other useful publications which are of such an instructive character.

As regards the question of Biblical criticism and the more blunt manner of detroying superstition,—say by ridicule, which in our opinion is the most effective weapon, and other direct frontal attacks, some highly cultured Rationalists seem to think this unnecessary, if not offensive, in our present stage of culture; they would like to see more gentle and persuasive methods adopted in Rationalistic propaganda. No one, in our opinion, can complain that the methods adopted so far by the R. P. A. are offensive. On the contrary, many think that the Literary Guide, the organ of the Association, is too high-brow and does not appeal with great force to people of average education and culture. At the same time, there is no doubt that to the highly cultured, it seems a waste of time to keep exposing the absurdities of the Bible and pointing out that it is a work of human production by semicivilized Bedouins who lived three thousand

years ago. It does sound childish to harp eternally on such absurdities as Noah's Ark, Jonah and the whale, the Tower of Babel the Plagues of Egypt, the Talking Serpent, The Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of the Jewish God, the miracles of Jesus and other Biblical tales. To adopt this high brow attitude is to imagine that everybody has now become so enlightened and highly cultured as to laugh out these oriental fables, and that Rationalism has already destroyed these childish beliefs. This belief is absolutely erroneous. As some writers pointed out in the controversy of the Guide, the number of people in Christendom who are believed to be educated but who still firmly believe these stories to be supernatural and true is appalling. Rationalism has not yet destroyed those childish beliefs though it has enlightened a large number of people susceptible to rational thoughts. The number of well informed people in the world is still very small compared with the unthinking and poorly educated masses who form the bulk of the population of any country in the world. Little wonder that the Churches have still a firm hold on such people and can make their influence felt. Rationalism is not likely to become a power in any land until the majority are sufficiently educated to understand its meaning and the enlightenment it sheds on the ridiculous claims of supernaturalism. Only last month a number of clergymen in England, including the Bishop of London, firmly asserted before a Coroner's inquest that a mad vicar at Oldham who committed suicide, was possessed of an evil spirit! Such being the case in countries that boast of high civilization, how can it be said that Rationalists should cease to smash the Bible, to discredit Christianity and other religions that teach such supernatural absurdities? Ofcourse, this must be done with tact and decency, for any coarse and vulgar method would be highly offensive and objectionable. But the duty of every Rationalist should be to destroy superstition and teach people the errors of their way of thinking.

The Churches not only find their great strength in the ignorance of the masses, but they get great support and encouragement from those powerful bodies or corporations which thrive on the exploitation of the masses. Knowing that the Churches wield an enormous influence with the ignorant inhabitants of any country, and that they

have enormous wealth at their command for intensive propaganda, the captains of industry, the politicians, the rich and other schemers find the Churches their strongest allies to mislead and subjugate the proletariat. As Upton Sinclair says in his "Profits of Religion," this baneful understanding, between the capitalists, the politicians and others with the Churches finds its worst application in America. The reason is clear. The ignorant emmigrants from Europe, who form a vast number of the population of America, carried their religions with them when they settled there. One is, therefore, not surprised that such a religion as Roman Catholicism can boast of a large number of adherents in America. This Church, which is tottering in Europe, can dictate its terms and can afford to be arrogant in America. It is powerful enough there to command the respect of crafty and corrupted capitalists, ambitious and unscrupulous politicians who find it profitable to support that Church though they may not belong to its communion. *Sinclair tells us that recently a wealthy Jew, a millionaire, gave the Catholic Church in New York a million dollars in order to keep in check the Catholic labour societies which the Jew believed were a serious menace to his concern.* A politician eager to rise by any means in America may, in his heart of hearts despise a particular religion there; yet he will not show his true feeling openly. To him, a vote is much more important than the religious belief of the voter. Such men will favour the interests of a religion which they do not profess. We know that such is the case in other countries not excluding India where not only crafty politicians, but even professional men, with atheistical tendencies, will pretend that they are communalists, sectarian or church-goers for their own advancement. In England, for instance, this is exactly what one finds, and few there will dare oppose religion publicly. Even in France, where Free-thought is professed more openly and fearlessly than anywhere else in the world, there are still many who are afraid for various reasons, to offend the Church. Many people in France, unbelievers though they may be, find the Church a principle ally when they need its services. The Dreyfus Affair showed to what extent the Press, the Army, Society and certain political parties, were in the hands of the priests. The Press in

France is, even now, greatly in the hands of the priests. So one can well imagine how the economic question is a mighty factor in the power of a well-established religion in any country. All this shows how difficult it is for Rationalism, which has not the advantage of the churches which have accumulated wealth during centuries to make rapid progress in any country where the churches are rich and powerful. Rationalism as yet, cannot carry on any propaganda, not even in the field of education as the churches can afford to do everywhere. Yet, it is only in this direction that Rationalism will succeed in destroying superstition. It must imitate the churches and secure the education of the young. For it is only when proper education will be widespread enough that those who thrive on the imbecility and stupidity of the proletariat will find this source of power declining.

What has caused the marvellous success of the Rationalist Press Association in the few years of its existence but the diffusion of knowledge by its cheap reprints of works by eminent men which arrest attention and provoke thought? Rationalists must never lose sight of the fact that the future of Rationalism, its rapid spread among mankind, and the decline of supernaturalism lies in education, especially education of the young as the churches have discovered long ago. But the education of the young of the proletariat along rational lines will have to be controlled by the proletariat themselves.

RELIGION

ITS ORIGIN AND ROLE.

Ideologically, Religion is an error, an unscientific, untrue explanation of the phenomena and processes of the natural and social worlds. *Socially*, Religion has always been an instrument of bondage and oppression of the exploited classes by the exploiting ones. Religion, the buttress of social reaction, political oppression and economic exploitation, has always been supported and strengthened, both physically and financially, by the ruling classes of the world, in all epochs and all lands.

But what is the genesis of all religious ideologies, of all metaphysical, mystical and other allied religious concepts? What are the historical conditions and roots of these unscientific ideologies, of all God-cults and Ghost-cults, of all subjective imaginings and metaphysical dreamings, of all religious and religio-ethical poisonings and emasculatings of vast masses of mankind for ages leading to a retarding of the growth of all scientific human knowledge and of intensified class-slavery in the social world? This is the fundamental problem in the study of all religions and religious ideologies and their *role* in the history of the social struggles of humanity across ages.

Ideas are the product of the material conditions in which man lives; so religious ideas evolved on the basis of certain specific social-material conditions in which humanity lived. What was the stage of social development, what were the social-material conditions in which mankind lived, when Religion and religious ideas sprouted in the mind of man? This tracing of the origin of religious ideas to its specific historical roots will not only help us to know the social causes which led to the evolution of religious ideas but will also enable us to lay down and predict certain social conditions when religious ideas will cease to sway the human mind, will decline, wither away and die. Such an analysis will reveal and make certain the social and transitory character of the origin and life of all Religions and Religious Ideologies. The supposed Immortal God and Everlasting Religion of all religious God-haunted people, when examined through the objective lens of scientific Marxist thought, turns out to be tinsel, monstrous momentary illusions which arose in the imagination of man at a certain stage of his social existence, and which will vanish at a definite social stage. God and Religion turn out not only to be transitory historical categories, rising at a certain stage of the historical development of the human race, rising as misreflections in the mind of man of the complex, multifold, multiform and ever transforming processes in the natural and social worlds and doomed to disappear when other social conditions arise.

But what were the specific social conditions which gave rise to religious psychology and ideology? And also what have been and will be the specific social circumstances which have undermined and will undermine and finally liquidate this psychology and ideology?

God and the whole complex of religious idea, attitudes and moods is the product of man's terror, ignorance of and helplessness before the forces of the natural and social worlds (these weaknesses originating in technological weakness of man). Primitive savage humanity, ignorant of the laws of movement of its natural environs and of its own social organization, terror-stricken and mystified at the cataclysmic action of the devastating forces of Nature like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, this primitive savage humanity, by a process of psychological abstraction, abstracted and transformed its own qualities of weakness and ignorance into their opposites *i. e.* strength and knowledge, almightiness and omniscience and named it God. The God-concept, for the primitive savage humanity, was only a transformation into its opposite, the positive deified interpretation of man's own negative qualities of ignorance and terror, wonder and helplessness, regarding the colossal, un-mastered and undeciphered phenomena in the world around him and in which he lived.

Primitive humanity had not found out the material essence of the Universe, had not understood the developing nature of the world, had not known the dialectical manner in which the whole world-historical process was developing. Primitive humanity had not attained an understanding of how astronomical evolution had brought planet earth into existence, how geological evolution on the planet earth at a certain stage had produced conditions like water, cooling of earth's temperature etc., when Life became possible and evolved. Primitive humanity did not know the history of life, how the whole process of evolution of life culminated finally in the birth of human species. Neither did primitive humanity understand what were the driving forces of all evolution, of evolution even of the collective social (herd) organization in which it then lived. The Natural Sciences viz. Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Biology etc., were still to be developed to offer a scientific understanding of the Universe. It was in the process of centuries of strenuous struggle for existence and growth, against his natural environs that man accumulated scientific knowledge of the world as a means to understand, master and transform to its use that world.

So God-concept and Religious ideology were the product of man's ignorance of the natural and social worlds, of man's capitulation before the forces of these worlds, of man's unawareness of the laws governing the development of these worlds and therefore also man's own development. In absence of scientific understanding, the mind of man explained things regarding himself, his origin, the natural and social worlds which surrounded him and

in which he developed in a grotesque bizarre and uncanny way. Such was the origin of God-idea and all Religious ideologies in primitive society.

Having once originated and taken root in man's ignorance of the forces of Natural and Social worlds and of their laws of transformation, the God-concept and Religious ideology took different shapes in different periods of human existence. Different Religions, Religious Philosophies and concepts of God arose in different epochs on the basis of changes going on in the social structure of mankind. It is necessary to understand how in the process of material struggle for existence against Nature,—the contradiction between Nature and Man, he developed technological and scientific knowledge of the Natural World which along with his own labour-power constituted his material productive forces, how these productive forces determined the economic structure of human society as also the ideological life of man, how the condition of social-material forces in which mankind lived in a particular period determined the form of the ideology of the period including the form of God-concept and Religious Thought. Such an analysis will help us to understand not only why Religious ideas dominated man in particular periods but also why man was dominated in these periods only by particular religious ideas, why a specific concept of God or Gods, a specific Religion or Religious ideology prevailed in a particular historical epoch. As historical materialism teaches us, backward conditions of social existence gave birth to Religion and changes in these conditions bring about changes in the concept of Religion.

Later, as a result of the development of productive forces of mankind, of the increased knowledge of technique of means of production and of increased productive power, collectivist prehistoric tribal society was dissolved giving place to class-stratified society, slave society being generally the first form of such a society in different parts of the world. It is necessary and useful to understand why certain concepts of God and specific religious ideologies prevailed in the environs of a particular class society, why these concepts perished and were replaced by another set of religious concepts when the change in the ever-developing productive forces of society brought about reorganization of society though invariably after revolutionary political explosion, and an armed struggle between classes on a different economic and on a different class-relation basis. But the most significant and all important fact with which one is confronted while retrospectively the history of religions and religious ideologies in all their transformations, is the reactionary role they have invariably played.

In all class societies, slave, feudal or modern capitalist, Religion by its very nature has been the ideological weapon in the hands of the exploiting

classes to 'opiate' the exploited classes. Religion has always been the 'handmaid' of the oppressing, exploiting, property-owning, socially dominant class. Religion attempted to neutralize class struggle the fighting out of which to its finish can alone lead to the emancipation of the masses from the grip of exploitation. Religion, by preaching nebulous humanitarian ethics and by side-tracking attention to mythical Other Worlds, blinds the oppressed and exploited classes to the brutal fact of class struggle and class exploitation, and plants illusions of class-co-operation among them, thus weakening their growing will to smash the system of exploitation.

Further, in spite of the great advance of the Natural Sciences which have decisively exploded all religious explanations of the world exposing them as so many lies and errors, in spite of the scientific formulation, for the first time, of the laws of Social Evolution by Marx, the first scientific Sociologist in history, Religious ideas are still not liquidated among the people. There is a deep reason for this. The unplanned state of the economic life of mankind, the anarchy prevailing in the social world, the conscious attempts of the dominant class to perpetuate religious terror with a view to keep the masses stupefied and submissive to their rule and exploitation by all instruments at their disposal like the school, press, stage, cinema, radio, these are some of the principle causes why Religion still maintains its grip over the general mass of people.

C. G. SHAH.

WITCH DOCTORS IN LONDON.

"Somewhere about forty years ago, when I started work in connection with the National Secular Society, I recall scandalising the more respectable members of an institution with which I was then connected, by opening a discussion with the proposition that "All forms of religious belief no matter how 'purified,' or refined, embodied in their essential elements PURE SAVAGERY," so writes Mr. Chapman Cohen in his essays on Free-thinking.

I propose to take you through this admirable essay and convince you that Mr. Cohen's statement is not exaggerated in the slightest degree and is as much applicable to the Christian religion as it is to any other religion.

One of the first lessons I learnt when I started exposing obvious absurdities in religions was that the more apparent the absurdity the more difficult it was to make the un-ready mind recognise the obvious!

Of course there is a way of defining religion so as to make this proposition appear untrue. If you define religion without regard either to its origin or history, if you leave out of sight all that people have meant by the essentials of religion, and put on one side also all that the overwhelming majority still understand by it, and if you make religion consist in something that is

not religion at all, and never will be religion, then you can say that it is not of necessity a form of savagery projected into civilised times.

Now, it is well known that among savages the universal theory of disease is that it is caused by some evil spirit, and is to be cured by some form of magic. The precise nature of the disease being determined, the next thing on the programme is to discover the kind of evil spirit that has caused it, and try and find one that would provide the cure. To find this out the medicine man is called in, and he after prayer, incantation, *jadoo-manter* or a mixture of all the three effects the cure. Some tribes go further and have a sort of 'de-lousing' station where once a year certain of the most powerful 'anti-septic' spirits are invoked to help to drive away any disease that may exist, and to prevent any fresh disease ravaging their village for a further period of twelve months!!

North, South, East and West, primitive life, past and present, display these general features—any variations that there may be being of form, not of substance. And now let's listen to what Mr. Cohen has to say—"Instead of taking a tribe in Central Africa, I want my readers to imagine themselves in the Church of St. Etheldreda, Ely Place, London. According to the "Daily Express", the Church had been so crowded on that day that the crypt had to be opened to accomodate the overflow."

There were "elderly businessmen, poor charwomen, male and female clerks, school children, well dressed women," all kinds were represented. People who had any kind of sore throat, or feared having a sore throat, were there in full force. It was the festival of St. Blaise, who is the patron saint of those afflicted. So, after the presiding medicine-man had gone through an incantation, the people knelt and repeated the prayer with the London witch doctor. And then the priest held two candles, saying to each, "May the Lord deliver you from the Evil of the Throat and from every other evil". So, in some way or other, St. Blaise having, so runs truthful Christian tradition, miraculously removed a fish bone from the throat of a suffocating child is expected to use his influence with the "Lord," and get him to protect his people from the Evils of the Throat. Central Africa thus shakes hands with Ely Place, London. The African witch-doctor embraces, in spirit, the incumbent of St. Etheldreda.

If Nora O'Grady and the Colonel's lady are the same under the skin, who shall deny the kinship of the African and the English parson? The Englishman gets a bigger salary, he performs in more elaborate buildings, he and his patrons wear more clothes than is the fashion in African forests, but in their mental outlook, in their spiritual development, they are identical.

Could one wish for a clearer illustration of the truth that religion whether found in uncivilised Africa, or in civilised England, is substantially

the same? Mr. Cohen then asks what they would have to say if a society of coloured people at one of their meetings had sacrificed a fowl for the purpose of scaring away sickness. One can well picture the dear old Bishops and moralists indulging in an orgy of writings to the Press! Now, are the proceedings of St. Etheldreda's any more rational or defensible? And let us also remember that this is not a foreign or an obscure sect but it is a part of the Church of which the King is the Head, and is sanctioned by Law!!! To me such scenes help us to understand Mr. Cohen's proposition that religion is savagery, no matter how elaborate the ceremonial, or how refined the language used by the professors.

Further Mr. Cohen wants us to bear in mind that this is a specimen of genuine, unadulterated Christianity, common both to the old as well as the New Testaments. The Catholic Church sells its charms to cure diseases, and places reliance on the relics of Saints and in prayers offered to them. Of the latter one has only to glance at the personal columns of "The Times" where you will find the sacred hearts of so many saints blessed for from passing an examination to a successful confinement!!!

Whatever the cause may be, it always is the one sure thing that it is "God's visitation!"

The priest of St. Etheldreda, with his crowd of mentally undeveloped believers, trying to cure a sore throat with incantations, hymns, and a couple of crossed candles, excites attention to-day only because a more civilised thought has left this kind of Christian pharmacopoeia behind; but this with the Christian neglect of sanitation and cleanliness, helps us to understand why along during the Christian ages of the world, plagues and pestilences were such frequent and deadly visitors.

After all St. Etheldreda's is only an example of the general thesis. Is there any difference between the savage who goes through a rain-making dance and the present-day Christian who prays to his deity to send rain or the savage who leads his men to some sacred spot and asks his tribal Boss to give him victory and the modern prelate who offers up prayers for our success in war or blesses submarines, or consecrates battle flags? Deeper still, is there any substantial difference between the savage who pictures the world as controlled by a number of huge magnified men, and the modern believer who reduces the many to one, and then divests the surviving figure of its most obvious human characteristics, retaining the less grossly material ones of personality and intelligence? The one is derived from the other. "It is the savage who is the parent of them all, and in the end it is to the more primitive forms of human intelligence that religion appeals," so concludes Mr. Cohen. It is now up to the "religionists" and priests to reply to the above. Will they oblige and enlighten us or are they frightened that if they admit the absurdity of this, we might make other assaults on their orthodoxy and they might be obliged in the end to replace supernaturalism by rationalism?

Let them not shirk their responsibility of guiding their "flock" back safely home; let not the stigma of "found wanting in their duty" be flung back at them by future generations! Let them reply!

D. R. D. WADIA.

RATIONAL RATIONALISM.

There have been many definitions of Rationalism, each of them emphasising the fact that it is essential for a rationalist that he should use his power of reasoning in every sphere of life, without declaring certain subjects "taboo."

But at the same time it has been admitted that man has come across facts and phenomena around him for which he has not been able so far to account. With the development of physics, chemistry and astronomy many laws have been discovered, but their source, nature, has never been explained. Rationalism admits this and is content with this admission. It argues that there may be a time when man will be able to solve this problem, but that as at present it is beyond his comprehension, he should not bother about it.

There are other people who, not satisfied with such a limitation, build up a theory on their hypothesis and try to verify it by their observations. One of these hypothesis is the existence of the soul, the subconscious mind or whatever it may be called. Before condemning the efforts of those who try to solve the mystery of our existence in that way, it should be borne in mind that many of the discoveries have been made possible by hypothesis, on which the scientific explorers based their experiments, the results of which often confirmed the correctness of their assumptions.

These theories on the origin or the meaning of life are often based on or mingled with sentiment, which however should not constitute a reason to make them objectionable to a rationalist. It surely is not the intention of Rationalism to deprive the world of all sentiment? Art, which has been through the centuries and still is one of the greatest assets of mankind, is to a great extent based on sentiment.

It is therefore clear that to classify these thinkers as idealistic fools, is displaying an ignorance and an intolerance, *contra* to the principles of Rationalism and equalled only by that of the defenders of the very institutions on which Rationalism has declared war. This attitude is the more deplorable as it deprives the Rationalist Movement of the help and support of rational minded people, who cannot approve of the unreasonable attacks made on ideas dear to them.

For these reasons Rationalism should not be directed against religion as such, but only against dogmatic creeds, conventions and traditions which have outlived their utility. In this struggle it should be remembered that phrases and theories alone never have sufficed to make new ideas popular. It is by introducing them into actual life and thus showing that a rationalist is really a happier person on account of his acquired freedom of thought and life, that other people could be convinced of the value of Rationalism.

Rationalism by deeds is far more difficult than discussing it and leaving it at that. It is not only about what has been said and achieved that articles should be written, but the practical use of the ideas should be proved.

All those petty conventions and customs which hide and protect the offshoots of a defective society in which fresh and healthy young life cannot develop without the greatest of difficulties should be disregarded. We have to become natural again and have to do away with all artificial mannerisms which too often considered to be a sign of culture, are characteristic of our decaying civilisation. We are afraid to be ourselves, as it is safer to be as everybody else; there is no room for individuality in this "herd" society. The public is always ready to run down those who have the courage of expressing their own opinions and following their ideas. For centuries rationalists have suffered many and great injustices, cruelties and hardships and the rationalist of to day is no exception and so has to be prepared to make sacrifices, just as much as his predecessors. The conservative mind has hardly changed since and though the times of direct and forcible action might have gone, the not less cruel indirect way of economic pressure still exists and undoubtedly will be adopted against those who put their rational ideas into practice.

It will not be sufficient to admire a Bertrand Russell, but more substantial proofs of sympathy should be given. Money is power and without that the Rationalist Association will never be able to achieve anything worthy of mention. Money will be required to assist those who have been or will become a victim of the reactionary forces, money is required for intensive propaganda, money is required for constructive work. In order to raise this money amongst the members a monthly contribution could be started, a proposal which deserves serious consideration by the committee. It would be ideal, if such a contribution could be made in the shape of a monthly donation, in proportion to the financial capacity of the members, thus enabling them to prove their sincerity and interest.

At the same time it would be a reliable test to find out the extent to which a rationalist is prepared to make material sacrifices, -one whiskey less a day, twice a week to the theatre instead of three times.

A Rationalism that could allow a scheme on the above lines to become a failure, has no right to existence and is of no more benefit to the world than any other religion. "*Chacun pour soi meme et Dieu pour tous*" could then also be applied to the apostles of freedom and in that case the oppressed world will do better not to expect any help from these quarters.

GODS AND THEIR DEVOTEES

Of late one has been hearing much about gods. Shiva has made his reappearance at Parel and Buddha was dug out of a mound in Bankura. Baba Jan was recently canonised in Poona and Gandhi was offered *pūja* only the other day. A new St. Francis was recently unearthed, too, incorrupt in Bangalore. Of course, the sophist will protest that there is no god but God. For the sake of peace let us call all these gods only the representatives or the manifestations of the true God who is clever enough never to show himself. I could not begin with a better or more popular god than the Mahatma himself, the latest and the youngest of them all.

Beyond a bare mention of Mr. Gandhi's name I do not wish to dwell on the Gandhi *pūja* which has already become an intricate ritual. He is a sincere man, sincerely fighting for the freedom of his country. If his over enthusiastic admirers have reserved for him a shrine in the Hindu pantheon that is no fault of his.

Now for others who, though they enjoy the bliss of heaven, are not so selfish as to forget the less fortunate mortals on earth. It is a kindly thought on the part of minor deities to remember the unhappy humans in their world. Consider the case of Shiva, for instance, who lay concealed in the bosom of Mother Earth at Parel for well-nigh fourteen centuries, only a few miles away from the city. Why did this god remain hidden from the gaze of mortals for so many centuries? Is it because he was angry with the past generations of our ancestors? Why does he make his dramatic appearance in the year 1931 of the Christian era? The reason is not very far to seek. Just as the gods of the Christian nations of Europe took sides with the Allies and the Germans in the World War, the god Shiva has emerged from the earth at the critical time to help Mother India to win her battle. Hail, Shiva!

I think, however, that Shiva made a mistake, if gods be fallible, in remaining underground for so many years. Think of the nice presents he would have received from generations of believers. Think of the relief imaginary, he would have given to thousands of the afflicted. Think of the income he would have provided for a contented priesthood. Judging from the presents of sweets, flowers and money which have been pouring in from the stream of pilgrims every day, the loss to the ministers of Shiva must have been great indeed.

The Mahomedans, also, had their saint in Baba Jan. This saint had drawn, while she was alive, large numbers of pilgrims from all over India. At her death, which took place recently at a very advanced age, she was given a record-breaking funeral, which was a fitting tribute to the saint.

The novel feature of the worship Baba Jan received from her numerous clients was that both Hindus and Mahomedans joined in prayer before her shrine. This practice, however, is not uncommon in India. If there were more saints like Baba Jan, there would be no Hindu-Moslem question to solve.

Lest the Christians should envy the Hindus and the Mahomedans their good fortune, God in his diplomacy gave them, too, a modern Xavier at Bangalore. Not that the Catholic Church fails to provide the faithful with safety-valves for their periodical emotional discharges. Recently the body of an aged missionary was exhumed in Bangalore after a year, as is the custom with Catholics, and found to be incorrupt. The news spread like wild fire and forthwith processions of Catholics began to wend their way to the graveside. The newspapers did not tell us of the unholy scramble to secure relics of the saint, which usually follows the moment any one is suspected to be a saint. However, it would be interesting to non-Catholics to learn that there are two views among Catholics concerning incorrupt bodies, which phenomenon, after all, may be brought about either by Nature or by human agency. If the deceased person was known to be good and *persona grata* to the clergy, the freak is straightaway pronounced a miracle. If the unfortunate individual was unpopular with his neighbours and at loggerheads with priests, they say his body will not rot because he neglected to make restitution or that he has done some great wrong because of which even Mother Earth refuses to take him back.

Lord Buddha, too, opportunely thought of placating his desolate followers by manifesting his twelve-armed image in Bankura. There is something naive about the gods. They seem to have a partiality for the ignorant and the unthinking. Long, long ago a few simple shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks in Bethlehem. Lo! The Angel of the Lord appeared to them and announced the happy tidings that a new babe was born to an immaculate virgin, who was the long-promised Saviour of mankind. A few ignorant coolies were digging the road at Parel—they struck something hard—and lo! Lord Shiva was restored to the worship-starved Hindus. A few unlettered cowherds were indulging in the innocent pastime of digging into the ground under the spreading shade of a hospitable tree in Bankura, and lo! Lord Buddha with his twelve arms beckoned them to prayer and repentance.

Truly, it must be difficult for the learned and the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven, if any exists. The lesson for the epicurian and the doubting seems to be plain. He may enjoy the fruits of the earth and the pleasures thereof for a few years in exchange for eternity of pain. The poor and the down-trodden has the endless ages of enjoyment before him in the life to come.

It is a great relief to turn from melancholy reflections to the lively activities of the American Laymen's Mission. The Americans to-day are doing perhaps better work in the missions the world over than any other nation. But why parade under so many brands of Christianity? Why give help to the needy in the name of Christ of this sect and that denomination? Is not man good enough to be assisted as a member of the human species? When we look round the wide, wide world and down the ages, what do we find? How many gods have not come and gone before Christ? Jesus will go the way Jupiter has gone, but man will remain until the final crack of doom. That catastrophe, however, if it is ever to come, will be forestalled by Science by the combined intelligence of men, not by any of the gods who fight internecine battles for prominence.

The philanthropic gentlemen of the American Laymen's Mission have come from America on a visit to India, China and Japan to see the work done by various American missions in these lands. Why do not the Baptists, the Presbyterians, the Quakers, the Adventists, and what not, give more thought to the people to stop the sources of distress and relegate their disputed Christs to the dustheap of forgotten deities?

In a few days a conference of delegates from various missions will be held at Nagpur to discuss the possibility of bringing about church unity in India. The League of Nations might as well summon conference of the representatives of the nations of the world to discover ways and means to bring about the meeting of the North and the South Poles. One cannot over-estimate both the good work and the harm done by foreign missioneries in India. They would do twice as much good if half their energies were not wasted flying at one another's throat. Have not these highly cultured gentlemen enough sense to see that a Christ, who is powerless to unite them into a strong body, is not worthy of their worship? What does it matter by what names they call themselves, so long as they are engaged in the noble work of helping their less fortunate brethren? Mention religion and people see red, be they educated or ignorant.

Gods really die hard. As soon as one has disappeared another one crops up. Perhaps so long as ignorance and fear persist, gods will be in fashion. At any rate the Upanishads, the Korans, and the Bibles must be burnt. If there must needs be a god—he seems to be necessary for the week-kneed, let there be a Father of all. But he seems to have been a clumsy fellow. Let us have a Universal Mother for a loving God—not a Goddess, mind!

BY THE WAYSIDE.

India, the Land of Obedience.

It is hard to find another country where obedience to the wishes of the elders is expected and carried to such a degree as here. Down in the South, there is a lady with two obedient sons, who have married according to her fancy. The old lady takes an active interest in the affairs of the homes of these sons and neither they nor their wives resent the interference;—of course she has a large estate to bequeath ! She has great faith in astrologers. Seeing that a grandson was never arriving, she consulted one of these *pundits*. Now the daughters-in-law are having a child practically every year. On being questioned regarding their accelerated speed, they say that the mother in-law is anxious to bless her grand-sons and they dare not refuse her wishes. She is fast ageing and as according to the astrologer, the male issues figure at the tail-end of the list, they have no time to lose. Another young man of twenty-three has just gone home to his place on three months leave. This is because his old parents are anxious to see him married before their death. He is drawing a very poor salary of Rs. 100/- per month and out of this he has to make a monthly contribution of Rs. 30/- towards the paternal home. He himself is far from anxious to marry, because he fully realises the uncertain conditions in the country. But how can one disobey the aged parents ? A great sin indeed ! Today the order is for marriage ; tomorrow it will be to present them with a grand-child. And that will also be obeyed. What a glorious prospect of running a home for three on seventy rupees per month ! We, in India, will never be able to improve our standards of living so long as there are scores of such young men who marry and rear families, without adequate financial means, only to please their parents. This sense of obedience is fostered by religion, and it is only when this basework is prevented that this exaggerated sense of obedience will disappear.

The Orthodox Parsee.

My Parsee friends are a bit of a puzzle to me. In many a respect they are quite advanced. They are eager to pick up the latest in dress, art and learning. But their religion and all its ramifications they keep intact. A young man who is usually dressed in the best-tailored suits will drape himself in the orthodox manner and sit through an hour of a nuptial ceremony, when white-robed Dasturs will monotonously chant unintelligible prayers and throw rice at him and his bride. Before the ceremony, he and his bride will purify themselves with a bath which is made holy by the addition of cow's urine. After the nuptials, they will let themselves be congratulated to the tune of the cracking of knuckles. The ladies will come dressed in the best of multicoloured sarees; while the men will be dressed in the

orthodox Persian mode. I am aware that gentlemen's attire is very conventional, but this convention has very little to support it. There is a tendency now-a-days to explain away all orthodox customs as beneficial or hygienic. I wonder what has to be said in support of the 'urine' bath? Throwing of rice may be very symbolic; but marriage is such a simple, plain and matter-of fact affair: can't this grotesque symbol be done away with? What is the modern value of a *Narjote* ceremony? Yet so many educated Parsees are the slaves of convention and will push their children through this initiation. I fail to see the sense of educated, rationally inclined young ladies dressing themselves in their *sadras* and *kustis*. How comic would it be to see our Editor going about with a huge scapular or Mr. Amiruddin Tyebji with a beard that has not seen the razor! Who can forget the dust that the Parsees raised some years back when there was a move in the Bombay Corporation for the grant of a free lease for a plot of ground for the purposes of cremation? In the disposal of the dead it is the ancient method of "offering to the vultures" that is still supported by all sections of Parsees. The whole affair seems so strange that one cannot but wonder whether every educated Parsee has a double personality,—one that is seen at the Taj, or at a recital by Heifitz and the other at a marriage or funeral ceremony.

Possessed by the Devil.

When I was a small boy I was told stories of people possessed by the devil. I expect such events occur amongst all religiously-minded people, but more among the Hindus and Christians. One night, at the annual festival of a temple, I witnessed a very impressive sight. A man wearing a hideous mask and an uglier semi-circular corona, danced madly, trembled from head to foot, frothed at the mouth, and did all sorts of fear-provoking turns. I was reverently told that he was possessed by the devil of the temple and was now asking an account of the activities from the chief priest. I had the temerity to visit the place the next day and there, at a corner under the shadow of the projecting roof, beside a heap of masks of the type I saw the previous night, lay a local labourer. He was fast asleep. His wife was minding his child. This was the man who was possessed by the devil the previous night and he was now resting to be ready for his 'turn' again that night. My Christian school-friends told me how women in their neighbourhood were possessed by the devils. They were mostly young girls who had married widowers. They were passing through their first confinement. When the temperature rose, they showed signs of being possessed by the first wives. Then they blamed the husband for marrying again, for not giving masses to their souls and tortured the second wife for wearing her jewellery and taking her place in the home. We were school-boys and we all believed then. What is more our elders believed! They were mostly ignorant folks and one could pardon them, especially so when you find leading Christian

divines still believing in the possession by the devil. At a recent inquest at Oldham over the suicide of a clergyman, the jury returned a verdict of insanity with an added statement that the vicar was possessed of an evil spirit. The coroner accepted the verdict and the extra statement as well. And this is what the chaplain to the Bishop of London says in a statement to the "News Chronicle",—"Evil spirits definitely enter into a person's life. That is the teaching of the Bible. In the mission fields the exorcising of the evil spirits plays a large part in the making of a Christian." The Devil has played a large part in the history of the Christian Church and such as are interested in the subject should not fail to read "The Life of the Devil" by Louis Coulange. The latter writes—"Formerly Satan threw his power over certain persons whom he tortured, either by himself taking possession of their bodies, or by the intermediary of the sorcerers who were his corroborators..... Nowadays possession is nothing but a neurosis, that is to say, a malady of the nervous system; its treatment depends upon medicine, and not upon the Church. As for the sorcerers' prowess, it is the product of hallucination unless-what is most frequently the case today-it does not proceed from fraud."

"Catholic Priests prefer Young Women."

So runs the headline to an article by "Padre" in "The Indian Daily Mail" of the 6th November. One Mr. Pauloo has roused the holy anger of a Salsette priest, and Padre goes hammer and tongs for Pauloo. In his article he explains why they prefer young women. It is not for any sexual reasons,—the Catholic priest takes a vow of celibacy for life. It is only for purposes of propagation of faith. Give the devil his due, these priests know how to advertise. Women have always been the guaranters of all religions. In spite of the havoc that the purdah system plays in their constitution, in spite of the inadvisability of early marriage, Muslim women support these customs staunchly, only because religion bids them to. A Hindu lady will submit to any kind of treatment from her husband because religion enjoins her to. Similarly among the Parsees, Christians and others. The wife controls a sceptic husband, the mother a revolutionary son, and the daughter an idol-smashing sweetheart. Fatima played an important part in Mahomadanism; Elizabeth spread Protestantism; Margaret of Alacoque, Bernadetta of Lourdes, and the Little Flower of Jesus have whipped up a flagging Catholicism; Madame Blavatsky and Annie Besant have discovered the message of Theosophy; Amy Mc Pherson has spread the cult of Christian Science; and some of the cleverest spiritualists' mediums are also women to boot. Their vegetative nervous system seems to be tuned up to catch the wave-lengths from other worlds. Perhaps it is the fault of man who for his own selfish property-owning instinct has enthroned feminine virginity and ignorance on the altar of highest virtue. Sometimes it is sheer morbidity that has found vent in hysterical delusions; sometimes it is the unchainable spirit, that

trying to find its expression along conventional goodness, has overshot the mark and has arrived at a new formula. But now henceforward, with greater freedom, we expect better of women. They will be as great slayers of superstition as man has ever been. Then probably we shall not have an occasion to say "Rationalists prefer women"; with the process of equalising there is bound to be a falling off in the influence that woman now exerts over man through the lever of emotion.

Religion and Crime.

Religiously-minded people hold their hands high up in horror at the very thought of liquidating God. They imagine that without Him this world would be a chaos. It is the only logical conclusion for them because our present 'ordered' state is due to the sudden awakening of this very God who till then slumbered in an eternal chaos. Looking round and reviewing the trouble He has brought upon Himself He must be regretting He ever woke up. But that is not our business. His followers believe that the moment God bids us good-bye, we would be all flying at one another's throats, and killing and looting our neighbours. For them every man who leaves the church does so for wine, women or other vices. Religion is the only fountain head of all virtue. In view of this, the conclusions of W. A. Bonner in his study of "Criminality and economic conditions" are illuminating. According to him, the minimum of criminality is found among the irreligious. There are two types of the irreligious; the one who does not follow religion because he has never thought about it, and at the moment has no time for it, and the other who always made time for it, and has now left it after a good deal of study and thought. The former will hesitate to say that he does not belong to any religious denomination; on the contrary, he will find shelter under a label. The latter will be proud of his agnosticism, and will cling to it more in adversity, because it is only his rational turn of mind that will help him to keep up his balance. No wonder then that crime is less among the non-religious. To the latter crime has no value. He realises that all of us have a place on earth and there is a greater happiness if that right of place is conceded to every fellow man. The believer has a life-after to settle his accounts, so he will have whatever he wants now, at any price.

THE TORCH BEARERS.

3. Galileo Galilei.

(1564-1642.)

Galileo was born at Pisa on February 15, 1564. After undergoing his early training at a monastery at Vallombrosa, where he showed signs of a great intellect, he was sent to the University of Pisa to study medicine. But he never completed his studies. Early in his university career physics and later geometry and mathematics attracted him. So he abandoned medicine in favour of these sciences. Unfortunately, financial difficulties forced him to leave the university early. On returning to Florence he lectured on mathematics at the local Academy. But his essays on the hydrostatic balance and on the centre of gravity in solids soon brought him fame all over Europe as well as an appointment as a lecturer in mathematics at Pisa, nearer home. Here he demonstrated that bodies of different weights fall with the same velocity, and that the course of a projectile is a parabola. But he had to leave Pisa because of jealousy. He vacated his Chair in 1591 and went to take up the professorship at Padua where he remained till 1610.

Here he heard of the discovery of the telescope and then did not lose time to manufacture one of his own and that too of a very much improved pattern. Galileo had adopted the Copernican theory early in his life but because of the peculiar circumstances under which he lived he had chosen to remain silent. The telescope gave him facilities to carry on his researches. He observed the configuration of the moon, described the stars of the Milky Way, and on January 7, 1610, he discovered the satellites of Jupiter, and later the sun spots. His "*Siderius Nuncius*" published in 1610 embodied all these discoveries. It was warmly received by the advocates of the Copernican theory. These discoveries brought him a life-time appointment as a professor at the Venetian Senate and as a philosopher and mathematician extraordinary to the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

In 1611 he visited Rome and was received kindly at the Vatican where he demonstrated his latest discoveries. Nobody raised any objection to his teachings. But the publication of his "*Letters on the Solar Spots*" in 1613, roused the suspicion of Holy Office. In February 1616, this Office declared the two propositions that the sun is the centre of the world and immovable from its place, and that the earth has a diurnal motion of its own, heretical. On the 26th of the same month, Galileo who was then in Rome, promised Cardinal Bellarmine to abandon the Copernican theory. He was in no mood to cut short his career by offending the Inquisition.

He returned to his duties and carried on his researches. He made attempts to get the decree of 1616 revoked but was unsuccessful. Believing that

the injunction against him would be interpreted in a very liberal spirit, he published his "*Dialogo dei due massimi sistemi del mondo*" in January 1632. Though highly appreciated all over Europe, in the opinion of the Holy Office it was a violation of the edict of 1616, for two of the interlocutors defended the double movement of the earth on scientific grounds while the third "Simplicius" espoused the old school with practically no reason at all. The Inquisition set to work. The sale of the book was stopped. All excuses were ignored and Galileo was forced to present himself at Rome which he did, in February the following year. Though treated kindly before, on June 21 he was examined under menace of torture. The next day he made a public recantation and received his sentence which was imprisonment at the pleasure of the tribunal and a penance to recite the seven penitential psalms twice a week. It is now agreed that the words "*eppur si muove*" often ascribed to him are entirely apocryphal. Though he was threatened, yet he was never tortured.

After a few months of detention, he was permitted to retire to his villa at Arcetri, on condition that he lived there in complete seclusion. But his mind continued to be as active as before. The moon's diurnal and monthly librations were discovered by him in 1637 a few months before he became blind. This handicap did not prevent him from directing his pupils and this he did till his death which occurred in January, 1642.

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The New Lord's Prayer.

(According to Professor Eddington who claims God is a kind of Mathematical Formula).

Our Formula which art in the Fourth Dimension, hallowed by Thy sins, Thy tangent come, Thy radius vector be done, in logarithms as it is in spherical trigonometry. Give us this day our daily binomial theorem, and forgive us our miscalculations as we forgive those who have erroneously triangulated our position, and lead us not into faulty calculus, but deliver us from quaternion errata, for Thine are the circumference and the radius and the "*pi*".

For relatively infinite temporal extension.

Q. E. D. in *The Freethinker*.

POET'S CORNER. A PARABLE.

BY

James Russell Lowell.

[James Russell Lowell, 1819-1891, American poet, author of many poems full of passion for human freedom. An ardent opponent of slavery, his poetry was said during the American Civil War to be worth an army corps to the Federal forces.]

Said Christ our Lord, "I will go and see
How the men, my brother, believe in me."
He passed not again through the gate of birth,
But made himself known to the children of earth,
Then said the chief priests, and rulers, and kings,
"Behold, now, the Giver of all good things ;
Go to, let us welcome with pomp and state
Him who alone is mighty and great."

Great organs surged through arches dim
Their jubilant floods in praise of him ;
And in church and palace and judgment-hall
He saw his image high over all.

But still, wherever his steps they led,
The Lord in sorrow bent down his head,
And from under the heavy foundation stones
The son of Mary heard bitter groans.

And in church and palace and judgment-hall
He marked great fissures that rent the wall,
And opened wider and yet more wide
As the living foundation heaved and sighed.

"Have ye founded your thrones and altars, then,
On the bodies and souls of living men?
And think ye that building shall endure
Which shelters the noble and crushes the poor?"

"With gates of silver and bars of gold
Ye have fenced my sheep from their Father's fold ;
I have heard the dropping of their tears
In heaven these eighteen hundred years."

"O Lord and Master, not ours the guilt,
We build but as our fathers built ;
Behold thine images, how they stand,
Sovereign and sole, through all our land."

Then Christ sought out an artisan,
A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
Pushed from her faintly want and sin.

These set he in the midst of them,
And as they drew back their garment-hem,
For fear of defilement, "Lo here," said he,
"The images ye have made of me !

AT THE SECRETARIES' TABLE.

The Reunion held on the 15th was well attended, there being as many as fifty persons consisting of members and their friends. It was a good occasion for forming new acquaintances. After refreshments there was a short discussion on the scope of Rationalism in India. We expect that on future occasions members will not be so shy and will be more willing to express their opinions. All were desirous to have more of these meetings.

* * * *

The Library has been used to some extent this month. But we do request our members to make better use of it. As it is placed at the offices of one of the secretaries, books can be issued every day in the afternoon. Besides books, we have Journals, like the Literary Guide, The Freethinker, the Review of Philosophy and Religion etc. etc. If a better use is made of the library there will be no difficulty in getting more books. With the progress of our journal we will be able to get books for review and journals in exchange which will be all added to the library. Our thanks are due to Lt. Col. Sanjana for the gift of his copies of "The Freethinker" and to Dr. D'Avoine for "The Crux of the Indian Problem" by Dr. Paranjpye

* * * *

Mr. R. D. Karve will deliver a lecture on "The Blasphemy Laws" on Sunday the 6th of this month at The Students Brotherhood Hall at 6-30 p.m. Mr. Karve holds very advanced views and we trust that a large number of members and friends will attend.

* * * *

The following gentlemen have joined our association:—Messers Ezra Mir; R. R. Shrestha M. A. (Cantab), LL.B. Dept. of English, Lucknow University; K. Chinnatambi Pillai B. A., L. T., Principal, Pachiyappas College; B. D. Soloman B.A.; I. B. Desai; Haridas Gopaldas; S. Haldar; C. C. Basu; "Ropera"; and Dr. U. B. Narayanrao.

THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FREETHINKERS

The International Congress of Freethinkers held in Berlin, from September 5 to 7, must, considered as a whole, be pronounced a signal success. Delegates were present from every important country in Europe, except Russia and Italy. Italian representatives had been appointed, but were unable to attend because their Government refused to grant the necessary passports—a display of malice and petty tyranny which evoked expressions of contempt and indignation from all present at the Congress.

On September 4 and the morning of the 5th, the delegates met at the rooms of the *Deutscher Freidenker-Verband* (Union of German Freethinkers) and dealt at considerable length with preliminaries bearing on the subjects to be discussed at the Conference itself, which was held in the building in *Leipzigerstrasse*, formerly used by the Prussian Upper House. It is unnecessary to relate in detail the proceedings at these meetings. The gist of them was the advisableness of combining all the forces in Europe making for the overthrow of clericalism or any other form of absolutism, ecclesiastical or political, and in particular to promote closer relations between the intellectual forces of the Freethought Movement and the political influence exerted by Socialism. Mr. Cohen and Mr. McLaren, representing the N. S. S., both emphasized fairly strongly that the Society was loyally supported by members of various political parties, and that they had no power to commit it to any proposition which would direct it into the wake of a specifically political or socialist movement. This was also the attitude taken up by Mr. C. B. Bonner and Mr. Pike as representatives of the Rationalist Press Association.

A public demonstration was held in the "*Neue Welt*," Hasenheide, on the evening of September 4, and I can best convey some idea of the meeting by simply stating that, from beginning to end, it was organized with German thoroughness. As the large hall could not accommodate the enormous crowd, a further meeting was held in the adjacent hall, which was also completely filled. A member of the *Verband* assured me that the total attendance was over six thousand. The tableau, "Youth greets the World-Congress," with its recurring chorus of young voices, and the vast assembly in the body of the hall and the galleries, presented an impressive scene and reflected great credit on Mr. Bruno Schoenlank, who arranged it. The recitation, "The Call to Freedom," was magnificently rendered by Mr. Alfred Beierle.

Mr. Fritz Schmidt (President of the *Verband*) in a short speech heartily welcomed all the delegates present.

Dr. M. Terwagne (Belgium), President of the *Federation Internationale des Societies de Libre Pense'e*, said that the Freethought Movement is essentially international—a fact which supporters of our cause everywhere must realize if they expect their efforts to produce the best results.

Professor Hartwig (Czecho-Slovakia) spoke of the laws in force in Germany specially directed against Freethought propaganda. He earnestly appealed to those who had already discarded their religion as an effete superstition to render active support to our cause.

Mr. Ronzaal (German Austria) threw considerable light on the general cultural conditions obtaining in his own home-land, where Roman Catholic clericalism exerts a powerful influence.

Mr. Chapman Cohen (England) was cordially received, for the *Freethinker* is well known in Germany. He conveyed to German Freethinkers, and to the delegates of all countries represented, fraternal greetings from Great Britain. We may be separated by an expanse of water, by difference of language, we may each have special problems of our own, but our common aim stands out clear from all geographical and linguistic differences. The course of our movement in England cannot be described as all plain sailing. On the contrary, in no country is there a more dangerous priestly influence than in Great Britain. Our clericalism is more underground, it works more subtly than in countries which are predominantly Roman Catholic; but it is there all the time, influencing the Press, the various channels of publicity, political life, and primary education. Public men in England, whatever their individual opinions, are not outspoken on the question of religion. We are one in aim, Freethinkers everywhere desire an all-round higher standard of human life, but find the way to it blocked by the ideas of God, soul, heaven, hell, and the fear born of such superstitions which must be superseded by ideas that urge men to concentrate effort on the present world. It is significant that in the New Testament mention is made of two animals, the sheep and the ass, and where Christianity prevails the masses are reared like sheep, taught to think like sheep, and finally sheared like sheep. Every inch of ground gained for freedom has been drenched with the blood of martyrs to our cause. We Freethinkers have a great past, and if we make up our minds never to forget this we also have a great future. (Mr. Cohen's speech was ably interpreted by Mr. Peter Petroff).

Mr. Hoving (Holland) in an able speech urged Freethinkers to combine their forces. "Christian love," with its insistence on the salvation of the soul and its dogmatic formularies was a degradation of personality in marked contrast with the humanism for which we Freethinkers stood. There are many religions, sometimes many sects within the same religion, but there is only one truth.

Miss P. Pardon (Belgium), the Secretary of the International, greeted those present especially in the name of Freethinking women, and made a strong appeal for the co-operation of the latter in everything that concerned our movement, as women's influence would strengthen the spirit of international peace.

The proceedings of the Conference itself began on Saturday, September 5, and the large hall was full of delegates and supporters of our movement. Mr. Max Sievers, President of the International Proletarian Freethinkers, and Dr. Terwagne formally announced, amid a storm of applause, that from January 1, 1932, there would be only one combined Freethought International. The principal speech of the afternoon was by Dr. August Siemsen (Jena) on "The Education of Youth and its Problems." A system of education based upon authority and dogma was essential to the Church for the maintenance of its power, but it was important to bear in mind that such a system received unstinted support from the forces of reaction generally.

On Sunday the discussion turned mainly on the subject of the missionaries and their methods of consolidating the power of the Church abroad. Mr. Boulanger dealt at some length with missions and their sinister influence in

the Belgian-Congo. The schools established by Roman Catholic missions there were supported by the Belgian Government, but in reality were completely controlled from Rome. Mr. C. B. Bonner (England) gave some statistics on religious missions in different parts of the world, and showed how they combined business with soul-saving. The State often supported these missions by grants of land and free passes on the railways.

The final meeting of the Congress was held on Monday afternoon, when Mr. Hoving spoke on "Natural and Technical Science and Metaphysics." Science had shown that religious belief, which is really superstition, was full of contradictions. The technical applications of science had also helped materially to weaken metaphysics, the speculations of which the speaker characterized as an almost inexcusable waste of energy. The moral consciousness based upon reason, science and experience was really the content of modern Freethought, and would lead ultimately to international unity. Mr. Ronzaal having briefly addressed the meeting on "Fascism and Clerical Reaction" a resolution was passed that:—

The Freethought Movement must associate itself directly with the realities of political life, and take its part in the cultural struggles of the moment. The Freethought Movement is not bound to any political or other party but its guiding idea is Socialism, and its goal is an order of society based on political, economic and cultural freedom, for only such a society guarantees the unimpeded developments of free thought. In this sense the task before the Freethought Movement is to support the Socialist parties in their struggle against Fascism. To accomplish this task it is essential, in all countries, to stimulate the masses to an active interest in the Freethought Movement.

The resolution is sufficiently comprehensive, and makes quite clear the general spirit of the Conference. The old International Federation is at an end. The N. S. S. delegates, as was stated definitely at the preliminary meetings, while welcoming support for our cause from any and every quarter, could not vote for a resolution which would make our movement dependent upon European Socialism or the organizations supporting it. It should also be noted that, under the revised statutes the voting power of these organizations, especially in Germany, would completely determine all resolutions at future International Congresses.

The Conference was fully reported in *Vorwaerts*, the Berlin Socialist journal, and also received a little notice from some of the other daily papers. This will be noted with interest by those who know how our own Press consistently boycotts everything connected with the popular Freethought Movement in England.

A. D. McLAREN in "The Freethinker."

"CONVERTING THE HEATHEN."

We don't hear nearly so much about "converting the heathen" as we used to hear twenty or thirty years ago.

One principal reason for this is that Africa, that happy hunting ground of the missionary, is now pretty well apportioned among the French, English, Dutch and Belgians.

Most of the remainder of the so-called uncivilized world is under some sort of jurisdiction or "protectorate." So that, if we except a few score of hardy nomads—who refuse to let the "ruling races" lock a yoke around their necks, and tell them how much rubber or how many elephant tusks or mule ears they must bring in per capita, and how much tribute they are to deliver to the local over-lords for the privilege of breathing and keeping alive—we haven't many "heathens" left.

The missionary really functioned as a "paver of the way." The flag followed the missionary and trade followed the flag. And this seemed to be the main object of the altruistic missionary effort.

However, to an ordinary person—who gets a headache even from trying to comprehend the difference between the tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee of high church and low church episcopalianism, immersion and non-immersion Baptists, and the dogmas of the warring Christian sects—it is difficult to understand how the simple-minded Negro could possibly be converted to anything.

If he should become temporarily converted, by feedbag or other logic, it is almost inconceivable that he would remain this way when the feed-bag is removed.

If he could possibly be made to comprehend the magnanimity, the humanism, the delightful spirit of camaraderie and brotherly love exemplified in our latest developments in poison gas, high explosive and submarine warfare, and the marvellous technic exhibited in bringing entire nations virtually to the point of starvation, he might be duly impressed with our sincerity and our earnestness.

Yet now it might be worth while considering whether the \$13,750,000 a year spent on "converting the heathen" could not be more profitably spent right here in America converting the thugs and head-hunters of our own fair land into something a little less tigerish or wolfish than these savages at present.

It might be even possible to instil a modicum of shame and decency into the beasts that turn machine-gun fire into a crowd of helpless children, although this is exceedingly doubtful.

However, in view of our present pressing need for some sort of conversion, it would seem only reasonable that we might let the Chinese and the Negroes get along for a few years without the 7,000 zealous missionaries now wasting valuable time and effort among these gentle savages. For they might then be available for missionary work in a land where such work might really count for something.

EDWARD ORLEANS in the *New York Mirror*.

[The American Laymen's Mission is now in India, to investigate into the work done by the Missions. Ed].

Parsee Burial Controversy.

The Editor,

"REASON".

Bombay.

Mahableshtar.

SIR,

26th November, 1931.

The "Times Correspondent" reporting on the above has, or must have, greatly flattered that section of the Parsee Community of Poona who favours "Burials" by calling it "The Reformed Section".

The word "Reformed" has been used very loosely especially in this instance.

If this section is really REFORMED, then it would not pay any importance to priests high or low, ceremonies costing hard earned cash and other "variety entertainment acts" that go with such belief.

In this case the priestly humbug is shown up in its true and none too flattering colours — digest, for example in the wishy-washy interview granted by the High Priest mark the hidden meaning of the all important statement that "He and his assistants left immediately after the ceremonies were performed". On his own admission therefore the ceremonies could have hardly been of a character so spiritual as to lead the soul to paradise! The constant fear of boycott and loss of custom (also spelt C-A-S-H) by assisting at a "sinful" *Burial* which was strictly "Taboo" by the command of the All Highest, and such other disturbing thoughts cannot be congenial enough to a High Priest to utter sacred prayers, a fact which any psychologist will readily confirm.

This is typical of *any* priest-to hum and howl when in a tight corner. The lack of moral courage shown makes one give up all hope of ever making priests into good and useful citizens once the bubble of religion and God is burst.

Even High Priests have exceptions and to them all honour and respect.

Is a High Priest, because of his being a Priest, not expected to have courage of his convictions but only expected to give a demoralizing show of always trying to save his skin? I would have been among the first to take my hat off to him if he had shown any such strength of character. I do, however, grant that there is that possibility of his not appreciating a sincere doffing the hat from the likes of me, as compared to the purse-filling and custom-giving hypocritical applause of the orthodox, which he would retain by pandering to the orthodox in the execution of a rite which has its only justification in its alleged "sacredness" (often spelt s-a-v-a-g-e-n-e-s-s).

But, is it not where there is a choice between "sincerity" and alleged "sacredness" that the "High" qualities of High Priests are usually lacking?

The plausible "It would have been sinful not to have done so" may take in the pious, but hardly anyone else.

It is a game ALL priests "religiously" play aiming to get deeper into the blood of man, woman and child, to infect it more than ever with the "priest-necessity" virus, which means so much to them and so little to humanity at large.

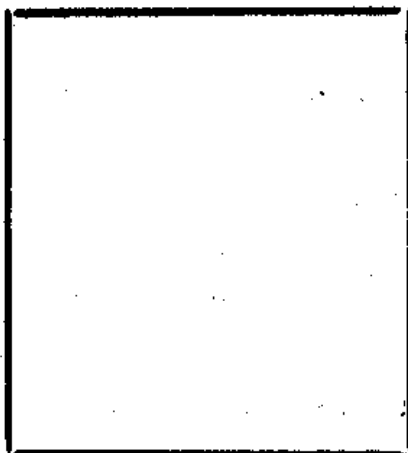
Though one regrets this sort of unpleasant controversy because of the grief caused to the family concerned, yet it is only when such situations arise that peoples' eyes are opened to priestly conduct, which, in anyone save those who hide behind the curtain of hypocritical holiness, would be despised by one and all.

Finally may I suggest that the word "Reformed" be not used so loosely by "The Times" or any other correspondent?

Yours etc.

D. R. Wadia.

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